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ERIC JAMES HEIL
RICO TOWN MANAGER AND ATTORNEY

A-0157

4-21-00

US EPA Region 8
999 18th Street, Suite 500
Denver, CO 80202-2466

Attn: Sheldon Muller, 8ENF-L

RE: History of Mining Activity in Rico

Dear Sheldon,

Enclosed is the chronology of mining history from the Rio Grande Southern story, volumes V and VI. Hopefully this will help understand the evolution of mining activity and ownership for the Rico mines.

As I stated previously, the assessor has Rico Properties listed as the owner of all the private property including and around the settling ponds and the St. Louis tunnel area (the Mervin and Martha mining claims and placers) and Rico Mountain Life as 1/2 owner of the Big Slide claim and Rico High Altitude Investment as 1/2 owner of the Denver claim, both of which are related to Rico Renaissance. Do you have copies of the deed in 1996 transferring the properties to Rico Properties and the 'correction deed' transferring the settling pond/treatment area back to Rico Development Corporation? If so, I'd like a copy for my files.

Thanks for all your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



Eric James Heil

Cc w/ enclosure: Annette Quill, Attorney General's office



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Contents Vol. 1. Over the bridges, Ridgway to Telluride -- v. 2. Telluride, Pandora and the mines above -- v. 3. Over the bridges, Vance Junction to Ophir -- v. 4. Over the bridges, Ophir loop to Rico -- v. 5. Rico and the mines -- v. 6. Rico to Dolores -- v. 7. Dolores and McPhee -- v. 8. Over the bridges, Dolores to Mancos -- v. 9. Over the bridges, Grady to Durango -- v.10. Over the bridges, Ridgway to Durango.

Subject(s) Rio Grande Southern Railroad.Narrow gauge railroads Colorado.Other McCoy, Dell A.

Entries

Graves, William A.Collman, Russ.Cook, W. George, 1941-

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Along the Rio Dolores...

Rico's Trail Blazers

*Proud Ute Indians, Early Prospectors
and the Beginning of Rico*

By Russ Collman



No. 4

RICO has a history that goes back beyond the establishment of the famous silver-mining town of Aspen, and one that goes back nearly as far as that of the well-known "Cloud City" of Leadville. The mines above Rico have produced over \$35 million (more like nearly \$1 billion in today's inflated dollars) in precious minerals since the first prospectors arrived—such as gold and silver—as well as more mundane metals: copper, lead, zinc and iron pyrites. However, Rico is in a far more remote region than Aspen or Leadville.

In the early years, long before the arrival of the Rio Grande Southern, there was only one principal way in and out of Rico, the poor trail over the mountains to Rockwood. And since the demise of the RGS in 1951, this is true again—with Colorado Highway 145 having the distinction today. In the past, this highway was poorly maintained, and during the winter months, snow often closed this rough route over Lizard Head Pass.

The isolation of Rico accounts for this mining camp's lack of fame and notoriety.

Rich mineral deposits were mined here as early as July of 1869. Two mining prospectors, Sheldon Shafer and Joseph Fearheiler, headed north from Santa Fe, New Mexico, during 1869. After they reached the so-called "Big Bend" of the Dolores River, these two men pushed on north and were impressed with indications of precious metals at Silver Creek. As a result of their findings, the Pioneer mining claim was established—the first one in the district—which covered parts of what are known today as the Shamrock, Smuggler and Riverside claims. These men also made a claim they called the "Nigger Baby," because of the abundance of black oxide of manganese at this site. Rico residents said that the men working underground at this mine came off their shifts looking like coal miners. This unusual designation was later given to part of the high peak northeast of Rico (Telescope Mountain). Nevertheless,

his unusual name remains a part of Rico's colorful past. (Refer to the U.S. Geological survey map in the first part of this volume.)

Joseph Fearheiler was killed by Ute Indians in 1870, as he was traveling toward New Mexico. Several prospectors had visited the site of Rico during 1870, but no one ventured back to this early-day mining camp on the Dolores River during the following year, presumably because of Fearheiler's untimely death.

One of the men who visited Shafer's and Fearheiler's mining claim in 1870 was R. C. Darling, who had been hired to survey the boundaries of the Ute Indian reservation at this time. He located some mining claims in the area, and then he went on with his surveying work. His name was later given to Darling Ridge, a promontory of Expectation Mountain, west of Rico.

The Ute Indians considered all of the mountain country of Colorado their homeland. They had lived in this region for hundreds of years, and they rightly believed white men were trespassers. The Treaty of 1868 set aside most of Colorado west of the high mountains for their use "forever." However, "forever" lasted only a few years. Gold and silver was discovered in the Ute Reservation in the San Juan Region, and the prospectors decided that the Utes had no need for these rich mineral deposits! So, they should be forced to move elsewhere, allowing the prospectors to acquire wealth without being harassed by "ignorant savages," as they called the native Americans.

After clashes between Indians and prospectors, Felix Brunot, chairman of the so-called "Peace Commission," was sent west from Washington, D.C., to work out a treaty that would force the Utes to give up about 100 million acres in the San Juans. The resulting "Brunot Treaty" of 1873 removed the Utes from the mining region in southwestern Colorado, and a new location was established for the Southern Ute Indian Agency about 1875. However, Mr. Brunot had to call Otto Mears to intercede with Chief Ouray before the Utes would give up their land. The Utes trusted Otto, having dealt with him before, and he was able to settle things inside a Ute lodge, sitting on a buffalo robe

with the Ute leaders. Amazingly, the resulting settlement paid the Utes a mere 12 cents per acre! However, the annual payments going to the Indians were increased, and Chief Ouray was paid a salary of \$1,000 per year.

During 1872—before the new treaty went into effect—R. C. Darling led a large group of men from Santa Fe to the Rico mining camp, financed by U.S. Army officers and wealthy individuals from back East. At this time, some mining work was done on diggings that were to become the Atlantic Cable, Aztec, Phoenix and Yellow Jacket mining claims. Although not much of value was produced during the 1872 "expedition," prospecting was resumed again in the Rico mining district in 1877. And by 1878, the little mining camp became quite active, particularly after Sandy Campbell, John Glasgow and David Swickhimer and others arrived.

All of this activity resulted in the location of several valuable claims, including the Atlantic Cable, Aztec, Black Hawk, Columbia, Cross, Grand View, Major, Phoenix and Yellow Jacket mines. Then, during the spring of 1879, rich silver ore was discovered on Nigger Baby Hill, which resulted in a "rush" to the Pioneer Mining District—before the mining camp even had an official name.

Before 1879, Rico was commonly known as "Carbonate City" (or the "Carbonate Camp"), and several other names were suggested for this booming camp on the Dolores River. As a compromise, a man by the name of William Weston suggested the Spanish name "Rico." Of course, the obvious reason was the early-day prospectors expected to find rich mining lodes in this section of the San Juan Region. So... "Rico" it was by the summer of 1879.

By August of 1879, Rico had a real mining boom underway. And by August 21, 1879, the first issue of **THE DOLORES NEWS** was published—originally printed on the press of **THE SILVERTON MINER** and carried over the mountains to Rico. During the same month, the first two-story house was constructed in Rico, erected by Charles A. Mantz, the first editor of the **NEWS**.

The newspapers of Rico had considerable

influence on the town and the mining district. **THE DOLORES NEWS** was the first newspaper in Rico, established in 1879, as stated above. However, other weekly newspapers followed in the footsteps of the **NEWS**. In this volume we have chosen stories primarily from **THE RICO DEMOCRAT** and its successor, **THE RICO SUN**. These historic articles have come from the collection of Larry Pleasant of Dolores, who preserved these issues for the enjoyment of himself and others. (Successive owners renamed the Rico newspaper.)

During September of 1879, the first freight was hauled into Rico by wagons, bringing machinery and supplies for a saw-mill. This was established about three miles north of the little mining town, near the site of what later became the siding at Burns.

In January of 1880, J. F. Wannemaker surveyed Rico and platted the streets and avenues. At this time, Rico consisted of 320 acres, a mile long (north to south) and a half-mile wide, on a terrace above the Dolores River. Later in the year, a citizen's militia was organized, established primarily to protect local residents against attacks from Ute Indians. (This group became part of the Colorado National Guard at a later date.)

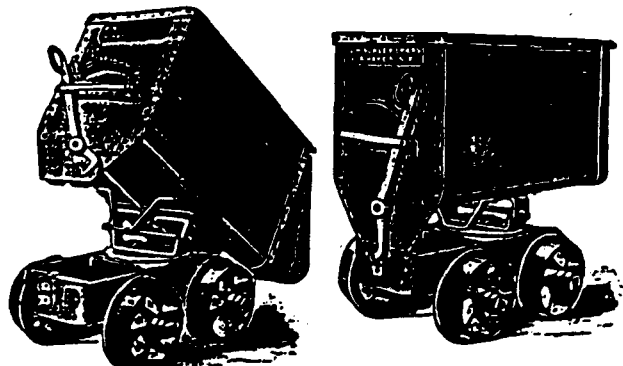
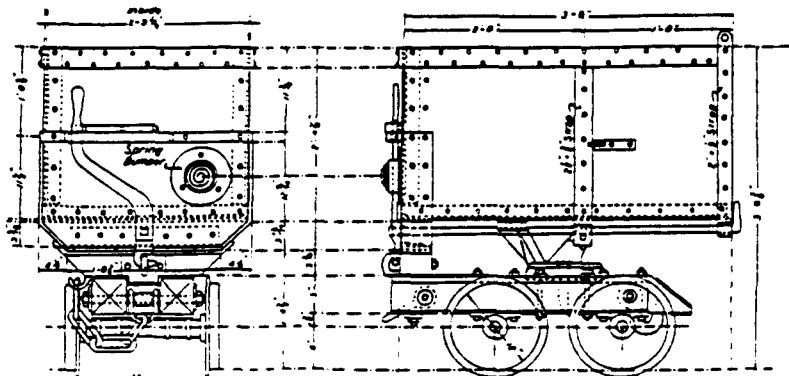
On March 13 of 1880, the first president of the Grand View Mining & Smelting Company arrived in Rico. And during April of this year, the construction of the Grand View Smelter was started. Since the Denver & Rio Grande Railway had only reached Alamosa by this time, machinery for the smelter had to be hauled by wagon over the San Juan Mountains to Pagosa Springs. From this point, the wagons traveled to Animas City (just north of what became Durango), the western terminus of the D&RG line from

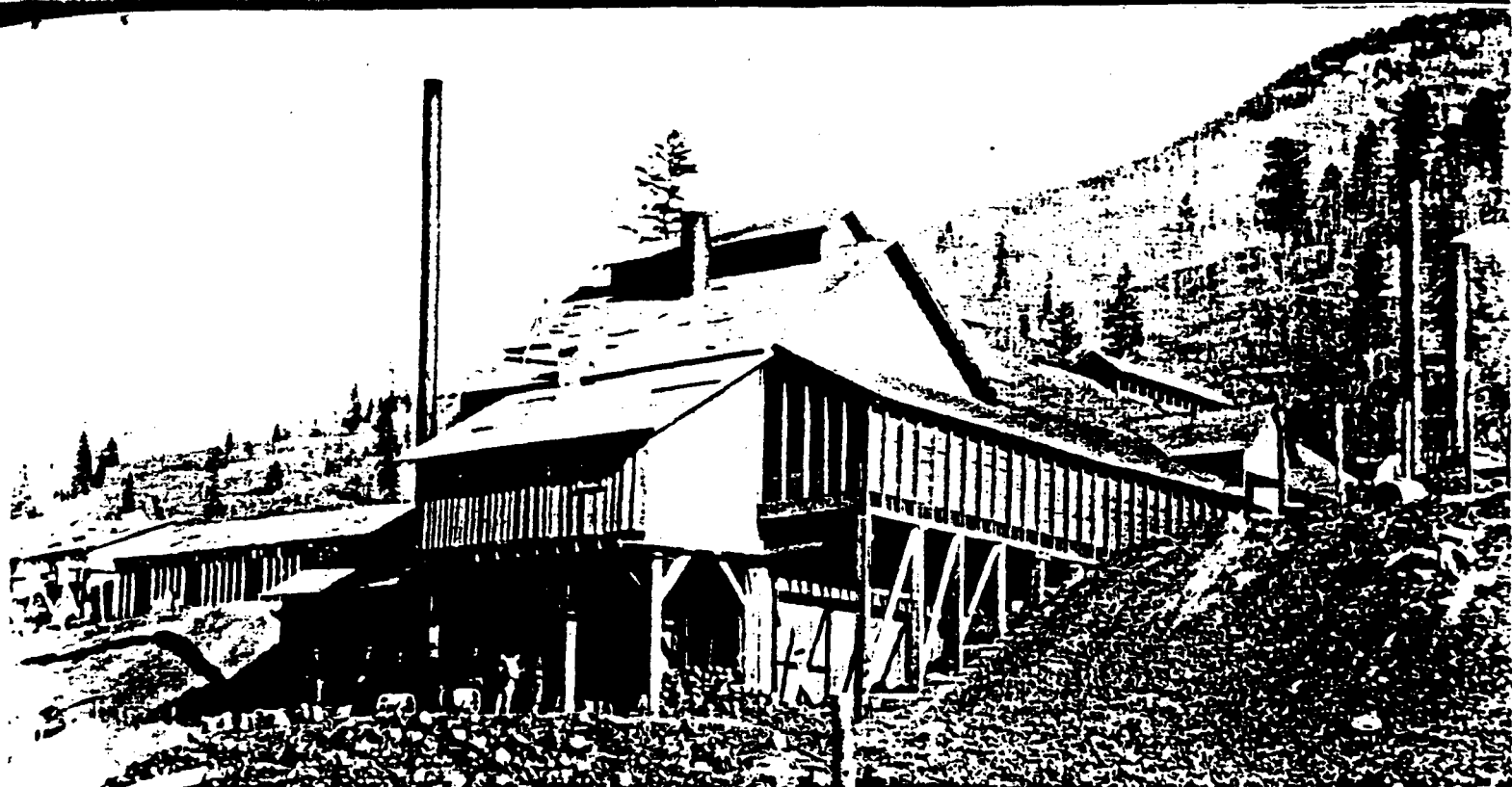
Alamosa. The freight wagons then went west to Mancos, and then more-or-less northward over what is known as Bear Creek Hill. They were then lowered by heavy ropes to the Dolores River Valley at a site about 15 miles south of Rico. Thence, the poor struggling teams hauled their loads up along what was then known as the Rio Dolores to Rico. Good weather allowed the Grand View Smelter to be "blown in" on November 7, 1880, and this facility began to produce bullion.

Until this time, the Pioneer Mining District, Rico and the surrounding area were part of Ouray County—and a trip to Ouray must have been a very rough ride to endure by horseback or in a bouncing stagecoach. However, early in 1881, the Colorado General Assembly established Dolores County, and Rico became the county seat.

The hopes of the district's miners became rather soured during the last part of the 1880's. However, during the fall of 1887, David Swickhimer struck a rich vein of ore in the Enterprise Mine on Newman Hill (part of Dolores Mountain, east of Rico). This proved to be the turning point for Rico, and several other miners resumed work at other properties in the Rico district.

The amazing story of David Swickhimer is told elsewhere in this volume. However, it should be stated here that when the Rico State Bank was opened on February 15, 1890, he was named the bank's president. Following that, the First National Bank was opened on June 16, 1890. By the time Mr. Swickhimer sold his interest in the Enterprise Group of mining properties in 1891, a large amount of ore had been piled on the mine's dump, waiting for the arrival of the long-awaited Rio Grande Southern Railroad.





CHARLES MILLER ENGEL COLLECTION -
COURTESY RACHEL A. HARDWICK

THE PASADENA SMELTER, the second one to be built in Rico, began operating in 1884. It was located near the final wye on the Rio Grande Southern Railroad, near the south end of town. In this scene, you are looking up the Silver Creek drainage. Captain William A. Adams was the principal owner. This was usually called the Adams Smelter in newspaper articles. The Pasadena operation was mentioned in *THE RICO DEMOCRAT* on August 21, 1891, in an article stating that J. H. Goldsworthy had secured a contract to build a wagon road to the mines on Newman Hill. This road started at a point near the Pasadena Smelter. Newman Hill was directly behind this structure. Reportedly, the Pasadena Smelter shipped 85 wagon loads of bullion during 1885.

THE STORY OF RICO AND THE PIONEER MINING DISTRICT

A Chronology of Events

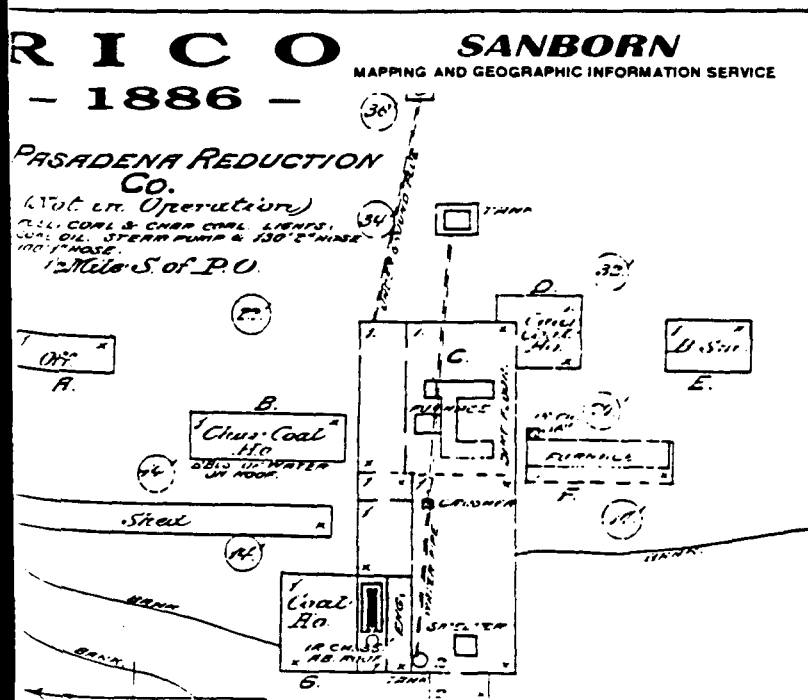
By William A. Graves

FROM JUNE 7

THE HISTORY OF RICO, Colorado, is the account of a small, remote mountain town—a mining camp—in a beautiful setting along the Dolores River, in the heart of the San Juan Region. The town has had a turbulent history of good times and bad times, so typical of many Western mining camps. However, Rico has been spared the fate of becoming just another abandoned ghost town. Just the opposite is true—Rico is a live-and-growing community in the 1990's. This chronology will identify many of the main events that occurred during Rico's existence as the principal mining town in the Pioneer Mining District, as well as its importance as the main commercial center in the northern part of the Dolores River Valley.

1776 Juan Maria de Rivera, from the Spanish territory that is now the state of New

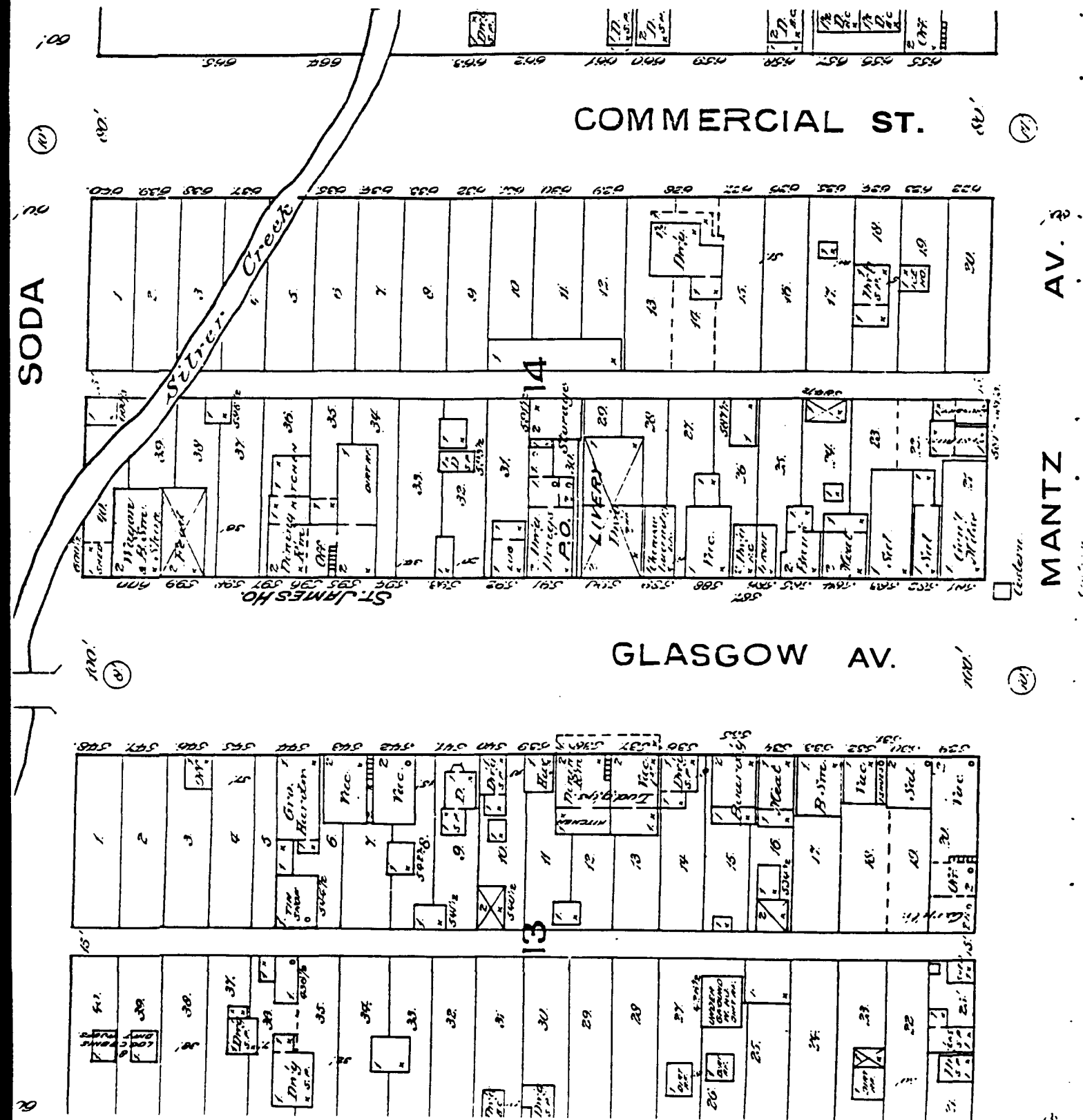
(Continued on Page 88)



- 1886 -

SANBORN
MAPPING AND GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SERVICE

Mexico, explored the Dolores River Valley and passed through the present-day site of Rico. Very likely, similar expeditions passed through this area from time to time; part of the vast region the royal Spanish *conquistadors* (conquerors) claimed as "New Spain."

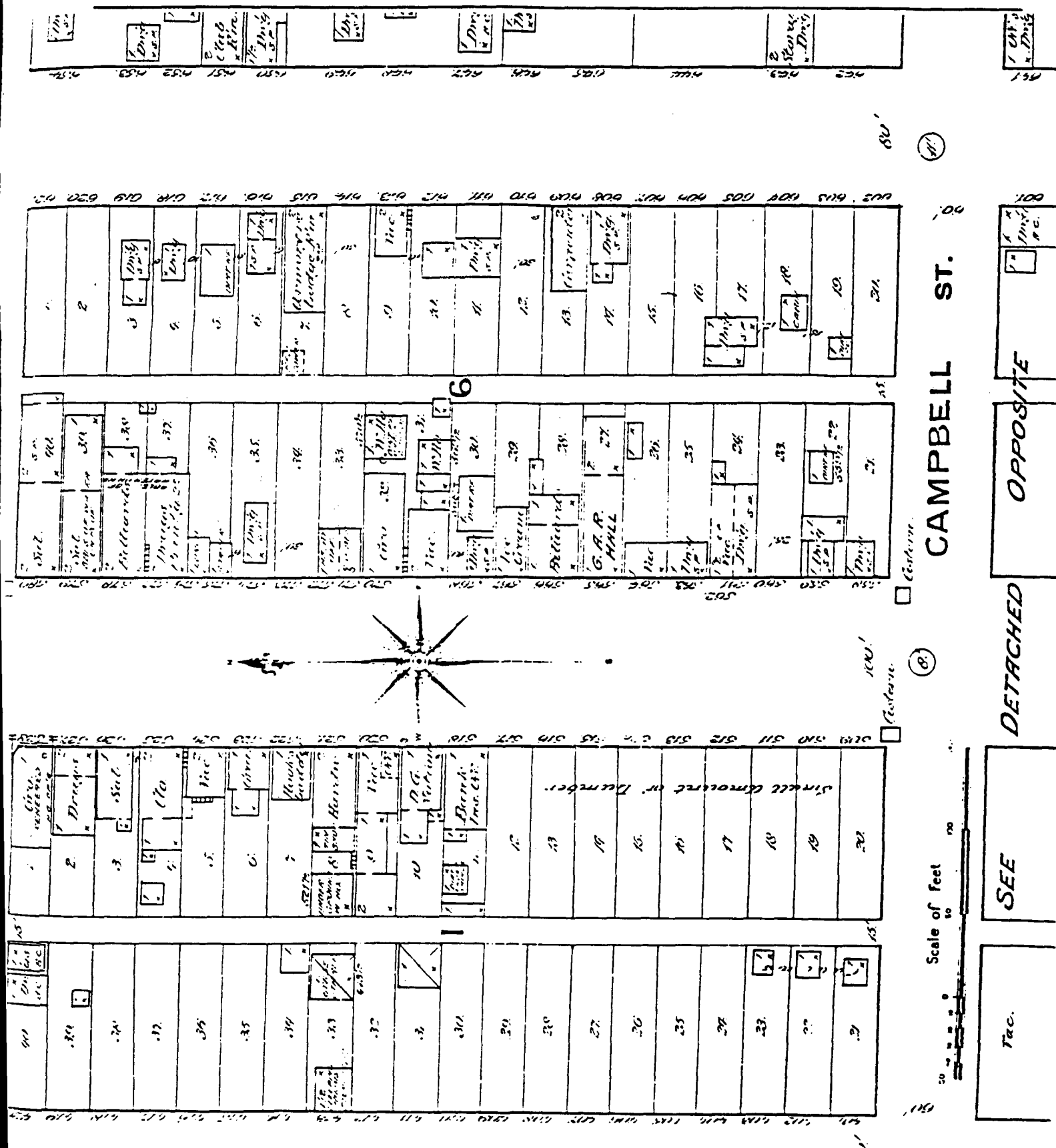


1833 Colonel William G. Walton led a party of about 60 American fur trappers from the St. Louis Fur Company into the Dolores River area, and the men spent the summer of 1833 along the river and at Trout Lake. They reported many Indians in the area, and they found the re-

mains of some old Spanish smelters.

1861 Lieutenant Howard (first name unknown) led a group of prospectors from Bakers Park (where Silverton is now located) over the mountains at Ophir Pass to prospect along the Dolores River.

1869 Mining prospects in the Rico area



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from, and/or even killed white settlers and prospectors.

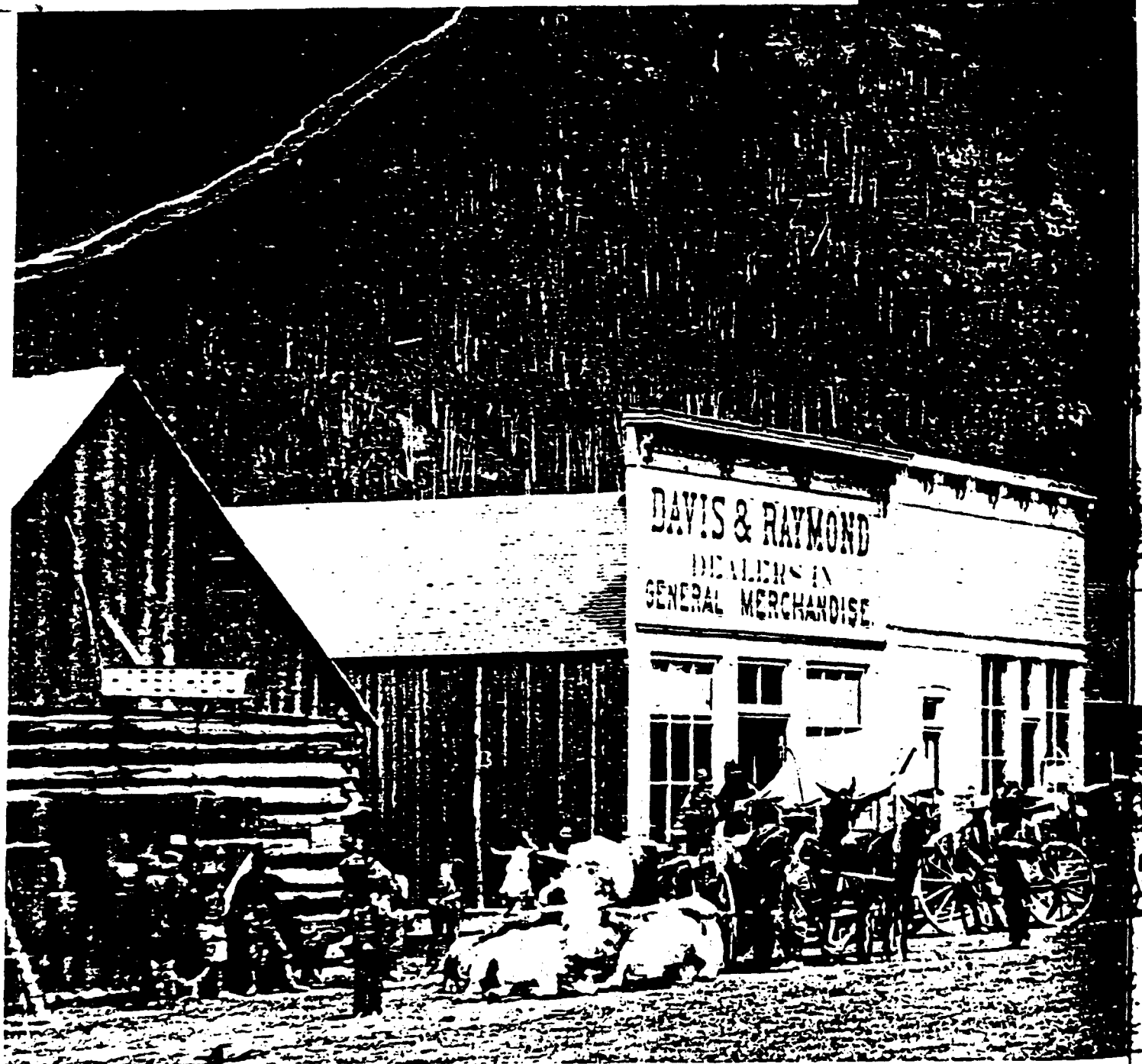
1874 Professor Ferdinand V. Hayden's survey party made the first official survey of the Rico area, and Hayden named most of the nearby peaks and accepted the musical Spanish names bestowed on rivers and mountains by Spanish explorers many years earlier.

1877 Ouray County was created on January 18, 1877, and at that time, this political subdivision was a very large county, which included the Dolores River and the Rico area.

1877-1878 During 1877, the first significant mineral discoveries were made at Rico. Promising silver strikes were made by a prospector named Sandy Campbell, who located the Grand View lode. The news of Campbell's discoveries quickly spread, and the mad stampede was on!

Mining claims were staked for the Atlantic Cable, Aztec, Black Hawk, Columbia, Cross, Hope, Major, Pelican, Phoenix and Yellow Jacket in 1877 and 1878 by such men as Professor Hayden, John Glasgow, Charles Hummiston and David Swickhimer. These claims were located in three segments of the mining district: Nigger Baby Hill, on Telescope Mountain; Newman Hill, on Dolores Mountain; and along the stream banks of Silver Creek.

1879 Word of the rich silver lodes on Nigger Baby Hill spread quickly during the spring of 1879. The first "outside money" needed to develop the ore bodies at Rico came to the region later that year. A group of well-known Nevada Comstock investors—which included Senator John P. Jones—bought the Grand View, Yellow Jacket and Phoenix claims from

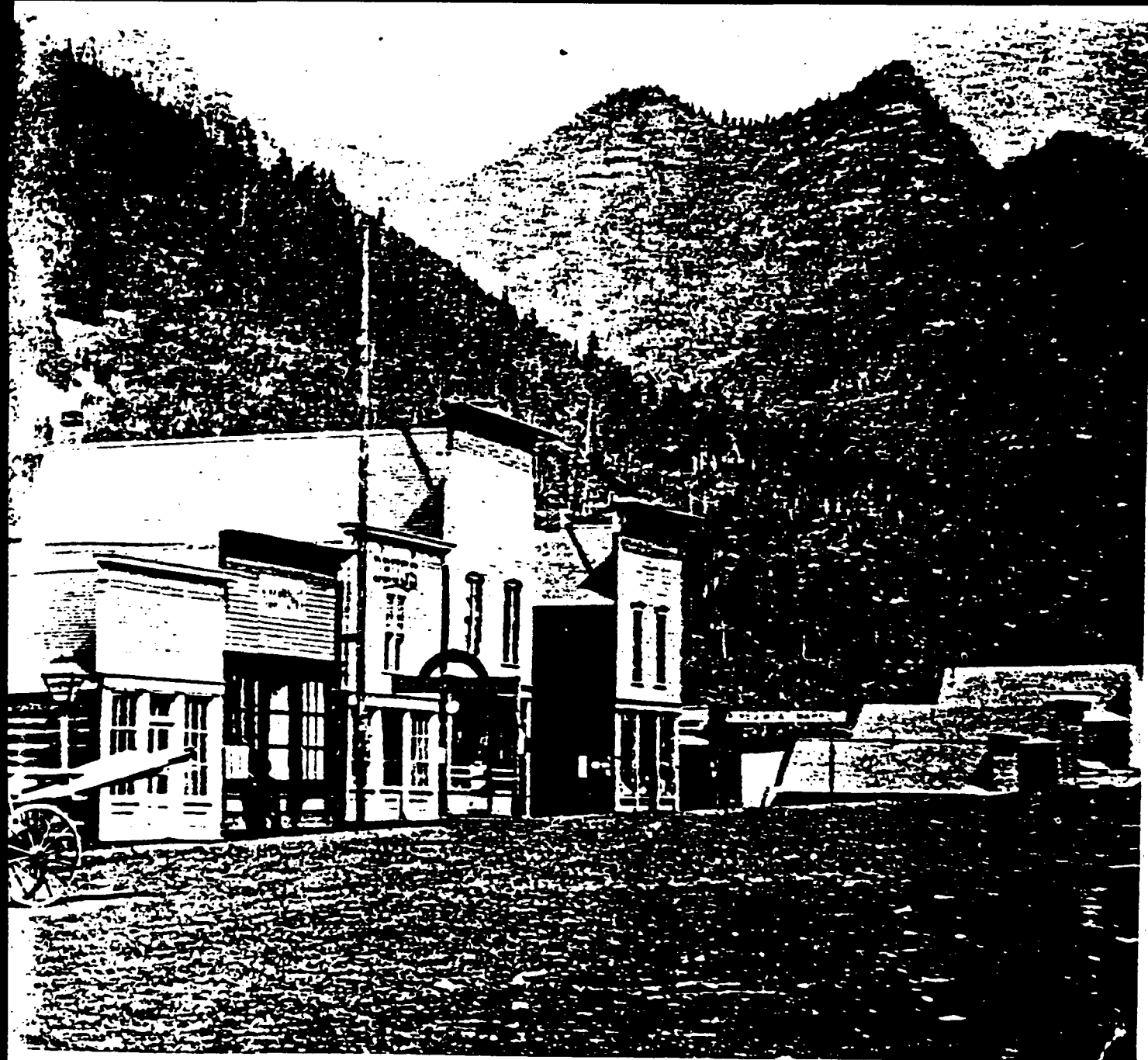


ORVAL L. JAHNKE COLLECTION

THESE STORE FRONTS lined Glasgow Avenue in Rico ca. 1887, facing toward the east. The log structure at the left had a projecting sign above its entrance that read "Horse Herd," which probably indicated the building housed a stable or blacksmith shop. It was located near the middle of Block 1, on the west side of Glasgow Avenue. The local boys gathered there to discuss politics, mining strikes and probably the lack of marriageable women in the community. It was a common sight to find freight wagons coming into Rico loaded with provisions to stock the merchants. The heavier-laden wagons were pulled by oxen—slow, but reliable. Mules, with ears longer than those of horses, were favored as good pulling power. Notice the large oil lamp on the boardwalk to attract attention to a shop. Sandstone Mountain is the prominent ridge on the skyline at right. A portion of Block 13 appears at the far right.

Glasgow, Campbell and Hummiston for \$60,000 (or \$124,000, depending on which report you choose to believe). The Nevada Comstock men made plans to create a corporation with \$10 million in capital. Rico became a boom town! From one log cabin in August, Rico had grown to 105 buildings only a month later! And the progression grew to 240 structures in December and 400 by February of 1880. However, many of the buildings consisted of only log walls without roofs, because milled lumber was not available.

Two sawmills were erected near Rico during the later part of 1879. These mills



were water-powered, and their machinery had to be freighted-in from Alamosa, which was the nearest railhead (on the Denver & Rio Grande) at that time. No wagon roads had yet been constructed, and it was a tremendous feat to cut a trail through the mountains from Durango to Rico. The cost of freighting was greater than the cost of the milling machinery. The first sawmill was set up by James R. McJunkin, about four miles north of Rico, while George Barlow erected the second sawmill about a mile upstream from McJunkin's mill. Neither mill produced much sawn lumber in 1879 before

winter set in, but both operated night and day during the following year, in an attempt to keep up with the building boom at Rico.

The first meeting to organize the town was held on August 18, 1879. The town was incorporated during December, and Frank W. Raymond was elected Rico's first mayor on December 22, 1879. The year of 1879 was the period for many "firsts" for Rico. The first edition of **THE DOLORES NEWS**, Rico's first newspaper, appeared on August 21, 1879. The editor was Charles A. Mantz, and he soon became well known for his colorful writ-

(Continued on Page 98)



RICHARD A. RONZIO COLLECTION

FROM AN ANGLE farther up Dolores Mountain, an unknown photographer took this view of Rico, believed to have been taken during the late 1880's. Commercial Street is in sight, at the far right, located parallel with Glasgow Avenue, which

is situated a block down the hillside. Snowcapped Elliott Mountain is on the distant horizon. Rico boasted of having a skating rink during 1885. The rink apparently was located in an open field in Block 2, Lot 5.

ing style. The first organization in town was the Miners Union. However, the Miners Union was a social club and not a labor union. It should be pointed out that Rico never had the severe labor strife and violence that embattled Telluride, only 20 miles away—although there were labor disputes with management, as might be expected.

Business establishments began to develop along Glasgow Avenue, Rico's main commercial thoroughfare. During September, the U.S. Post Office Depart-

ment opened an agency in a drug store.

Rico's worst Indian scare took place on the night of October 5, 1879. The Meeker Massacre was still on everyone's mind, and all precautions were taken. The women and children were housed in a strong, windowless cabin, and the men converted Raymon's General Store on Glasgow Avenue into a fortress. However, the Indians never appeared, and the only casualty of the night was an unfortunate burro, who was the victim of a "spooked" sentry's bullet.

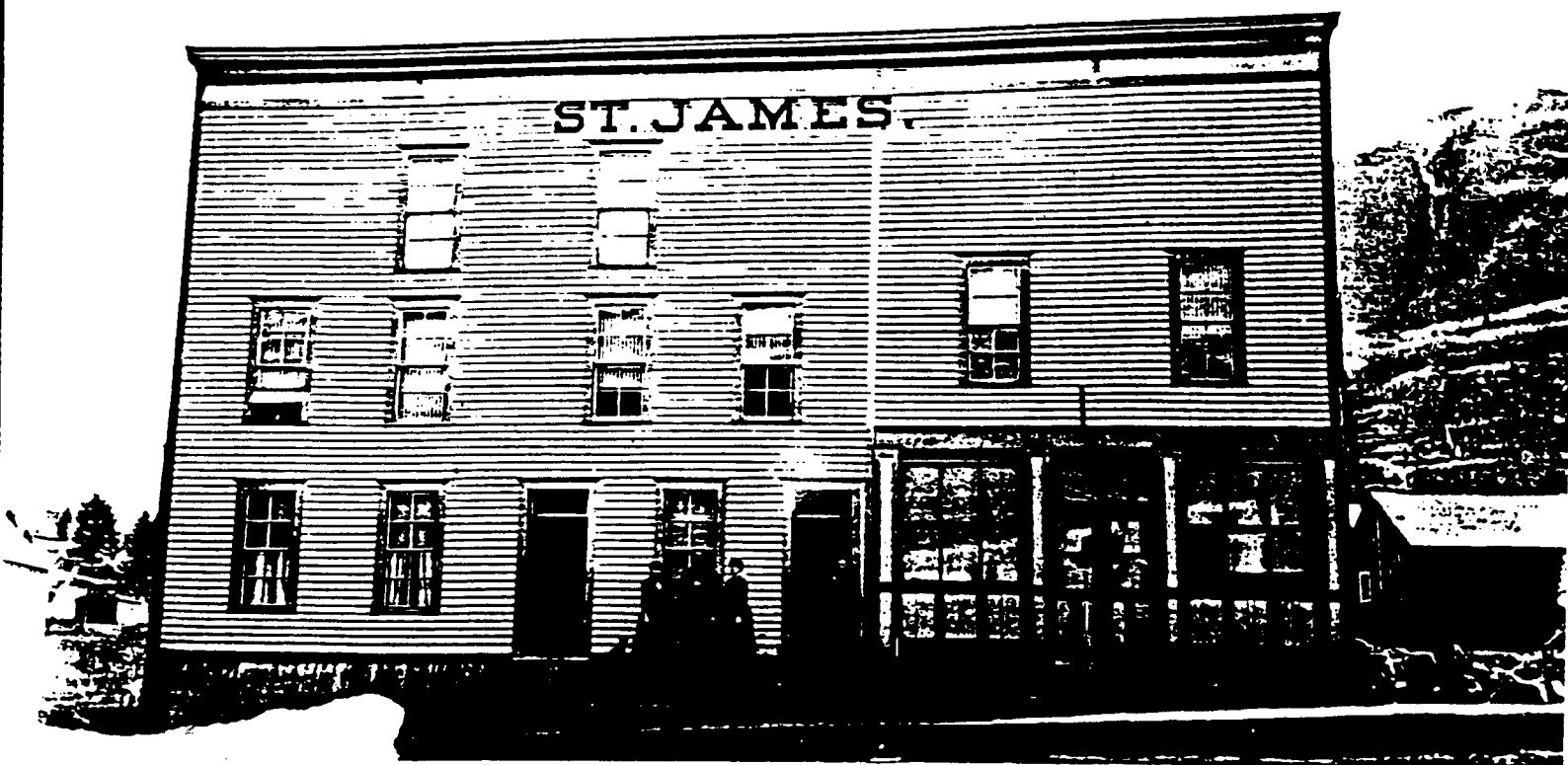
1880 Although Rico was snowbound during January of 1880, J. F. Wannemaker was able to get into the place to survey the new townsite and divide it into lots and streets. The lots were 25 feet wide, while Glasgow Avenue was 100 feet wide, the town's main street. It ran north and south and eventually became the route for the highway through town. The townsite also ran north and south, and it measured one mile in length by one-half mile in width.

The winter of 1880 was an extremely difficult time for Rico. Everything was in short supply, and food was the most critically deficient item. Merchants and residents had attempted to lay-in food and other supplies for the winter. However, the town was blockaded by snow for a

much longer time than was anticipated. No pack trains were able to get through with provisions from November until April of the following year. Food shortages were the most critical, and any kind of food sold at unbelievable prices. The ordeal was not forgotten, and it was not repeated the following winter. (See the newspaper accounts of this snow blockade elsewhere in this volume.)

The building boom that began in 1879 continued right on through 1880. The official 1880 census listed Rico's population as 894, and the town was growing rapidly. By summertime, Rico had six general stores, four meat markets, three hotels, two dancehalls, three blacksmith shops, two banks, one doctor, two lawyers, many saloons and only one tent

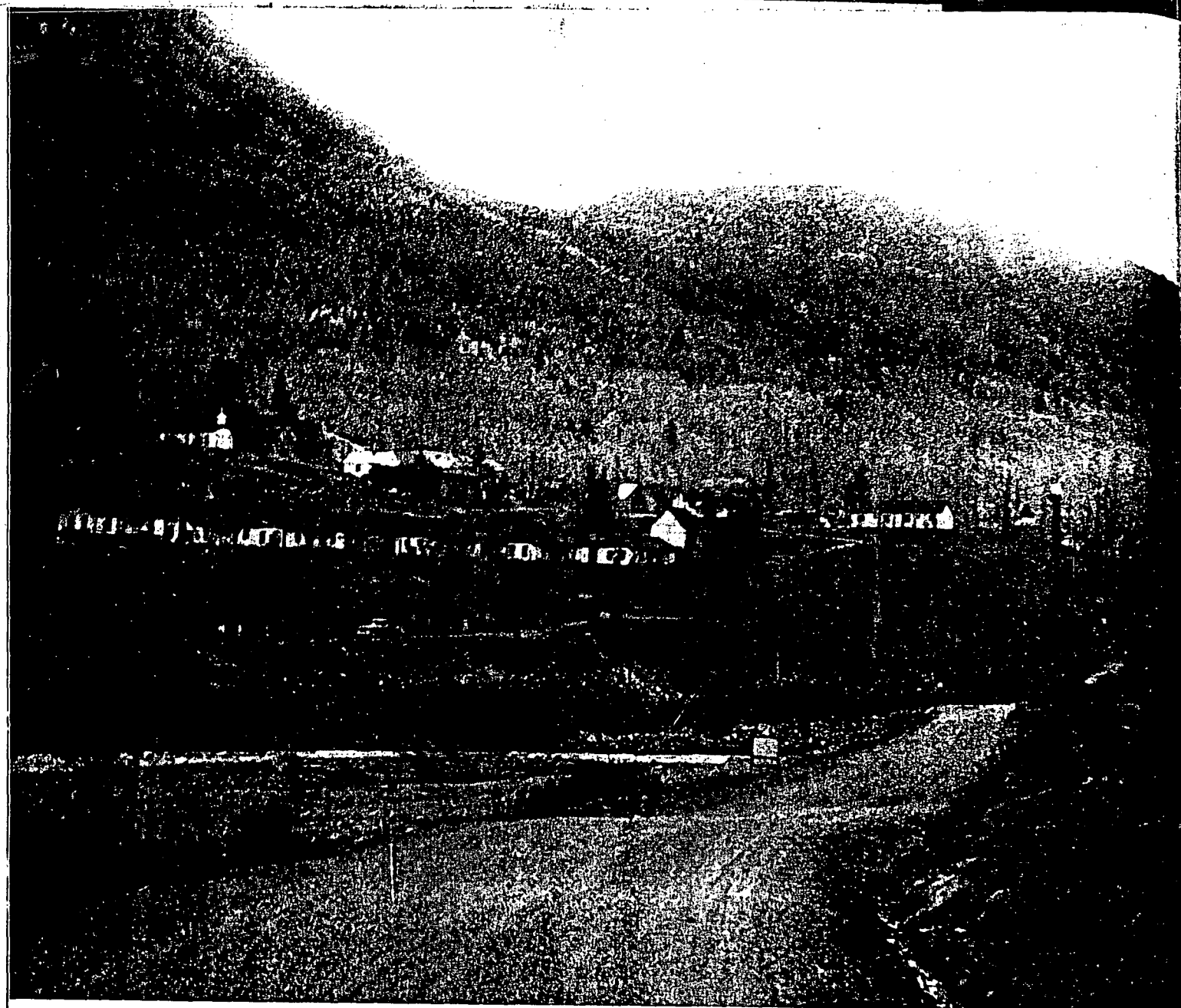
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THE ST. JAMES HOTEL in Rico appears on the Sanborn Map & Publishing Company map of 1886. This hotel was located in Block 14 and faced west on Glasgow Avenue, not far south of the Silver Creek bridge. The frame structure contained a dining room and kitchen on the main floor, in the left half, which also had an office. The staircase to the rooms was through the central door. Boarding here cost \$7.00 per week. The right third

of the main floor probably was leased as a retail store, with living quarters above. This side had a dirt roof over the rear of the structure. A silver plate, wine and cigars were stolen from the hotel on May 20, 1884. The culprits left the county when discovered. On April 10, 1891, **THE RICO DEMOCRAT** reported that Mr. Fred Archambault, proprietor of the St. James Hotel, was raising nine hogs, which had an average weight of 200 pounds each.



DELL A. MCCOY PHOTO

THE PUBLISHER'S FIRST TRIP to Rico was during late September of 1966, and this view was photographed at that time. Houses quartering the acid plant's families—mostly Navajo Indians—were located near the north end of town. "Navajo Town" was situated on an old tailing pile, and it consisted of two-room houses (each with a kitchen and bedroom), with communal bathrooms. Colorado Highway 145 was still a gravel road at this time, and it crossed the Dolores River at this end of town. The original white schoolhouse and the Van Winkle hoist are visible at the left.

ORVAL L. JAHNKE COLLECTION

THE RICO-ARGENTINE MINE was capable of supplying iron-pyrite ore for sulfuric acid used by the uranium industry during the time period of 1951–1956. With the demand during the so-called "Cold War," the St. Louis Tunnel was reopened to produce valuable ore from inside Telescope Mountain. The ore was trucked a short distance to the acid-processing plant that had been located north of Rico, near the St. Louis Tunnel. Rico is to the south, hidden by vapor from the plant. This operation originally was opened by the St. Louis Smelting & Refining Company, and ore was shipped out over the RGS at that time. The roaster building is at the left. Sulfuric acid was stored in the tanks (at the right).



THE FUMES VISIBLE in this view of the acid-processing plant at Rico destroyed the trees for a half-mile radius around the smokestacks—as you can see on the hillside at the left. The aspen trees are just now (1997) making a comeback from the devastation. The acid mill buildings stood abandoned for more than two decades, with only caretakers on site. Finally, sometime in the late 1980's, Bob Shank, Sr., drove his car past the plant—en route to Telluride on a research trip—and he noticed that men were starting to dismantle the processing mill. This was on a Tuesday, and by Saturday of the same week, the entire complex had been removed. Not only had the buildings been torn down, but all the mill grounds had been bulldozed and buried—ending what had been a hectic mining era, when prospectors frantically searched through the hills and canyons for uranium ore in western Colorado.

— INFORMATION COURTESY OF ROBERT SHANK, SR.

building for a church. (Does the ratio of saloons to church buildings bespeak the moral values of the boom period?)

Two additional sawmills were constructed near Rico, and lumber was voraciously consumed to build hundreds of houses, as well as for improving existing structures—utilized for better roofs, doors and windows. Nearby coal was available to townspeople for the taking; however it was of poor quality. A public school board was formed, but there was not yet a school building. A school term of several months was established; however, the students were forced to meet in very poor quarters.

The story of the Grand View Smelter began in 1880. Rico needed two things in order to prosper in the economy of 1880: It needed a smelter and better, less-expensive transportation. Of course, a railroad would provide cheaper transportation in the years to come. However, in 1880, a railroad to Rico was hardly even a dream. The nearest "end-of-track" (as railroaders called the point at the end of a rail line) was somewhere between Alamosa, Colorado, and Chama, New Mexico, en route to Durango, Colorado, by way of remote Toltec Gorge and Cumbres Pass. This was General William J. Palmer's famous narrow-gauge "San Juan Extension," being built to tap the mineral riches of the San Juan Region. Realistically, Rico dreamed of a passable road for heavy freight wagons, so that wagons could replace mule trains that had to use many miles of poor pack-train trails.

The outlook for a smelter was more promising. Most of the ore in Rico's Pioneer Mining District was high in lead content, which was both a blessing and a curse. On the one hand, the composition of the silver-lead ore made it ideal for smelting. And smelting would greatly reduce the volume and weight of the refined product that had to be transported to the outside world. On the other hand, the value of lead was only about 4 cents per pound, while the cost of freighting ore from Rico to Alamosa was about 12

cents per pound. Only a concentrated product from a smelter, which was rich in silver or gold, could be handled at a profit. During February of 1880, Senator John P. Jones announced the creation of the Grand View Mining & Smelting Company. He stated that this firm would construct a smelter in Rico. The town was overjoyed at this announcement!

Every new rumor about the Grand View Smelter produced a new wave of excitement in the town. The machinery for the new smelter arrived in Alamosa during late April of 1880. However, moving the heavy machinery to Rico was an incredible task. Eighty-five mules were required to create a wagon train for the machinery. Of course, Rico did not yet have a wagon road, and when the wagons came down Bear Creek Hill, south of Rico, the wagons had to be lowered by "snubbing" (reeling) them down the hill by using ropes and chains that encircled large trees. The wagon train entered Rico on the Fourth of July amid wild celebration. The site for the new smelter was about 500 feet north of Silver Creek, near the outskirts of town. Four months were needed to erect the smelter and test it.

The first production run of 12 hours was on November 17, 1880, which produced 25 bars of silver bullion, and this proved to everyone's great relief that the silver-lead ore was of a type that could be smelted. Although the smelter had produced silver bullion, the smelting machinery had some operating problems typical of any new plant. However, by December, the smelter was running steadily around the clock. Twenty-four men worked two 12-hour shifts.

1881 Although Ute Indian reservations had been established in the 1870's, violent incidents between Indians and whites were still common, both on and off the reservations. Sometimes, prospectors could not resist the temptation to enter the reservations in their search for minerals. And the Indians still harassed white settlers. During June of 1881, two ranchers in the Dolores Valley were killed by Indians, and a large group of whites was



MARGARET MATZICK COLLECTION

THE SILVER LEAGUE THEATRE was known as one of the finest entertainment centers in southwestern Colorado. It occupied Lots 5, 6 and 7, in Block 2, and it faced toward the east. This fine theater building was photographed in 1892. However, the structure burned to the ground in

1898. This happened in spite of the efforts of both the M.P.S. and the A. P. Adams volunteer fire brigades. Charlie Rohde (with the arrow over his head), at the far right, was the owner of the theater at this time. It occupied the lot previously used as an ice-skating rink.

organized to chase and punish the Indians. The chase led to the La Sal Mountains in Utah, where the Indians barricaded themselves among the rocks. In the inevitable gun battle that followed, men on both sides were killed. Six of the whites that were killed were from Rico.

Civilization was gradually coming to Rico, though. Dolores County was created from part of Ouray County in 1881. Ministers of different faiths visited Rico from time to time and held religious services in several buildings; however, no church congregation was formally organized until later. Two additional sawmills were erected near Rico, and frame buildings of improved construction appeared.

Rico needed a wagon road very badly to replace the pack-train trails. After two years of false starts, a successful company was incorporated in 1881. The firm was financed by \$6,000, raised by the residents of Rico, in order for it to build a toll road. The new toll road was built

south along the Dolores River to its confluence with Scotch Creek, where it turned east and climbed up along Scotch Creek into the La Plata Mountains. It crossed the mountain ridge and dropped down along Hermosa Creek to the town of Hermosa on the Animas River. Hermosa was 11 miles north of Durango, and a wagon road had already been built to connect the two towns. The new road was completed in September of 1881. It was a success and greatly lowered freight rates.

1882 When construction of the Denver & Rio Grande's Silverton Branch reached Rockwood during January of 1882, a new and better wagon road was built to connect with the railroad at Rockwood. The new road ran south from Rico along the Dolores River, to the confluence with Scotch Creek. The road then headed east up steep slopes along Scotch Creek, over the La Plata Mountains and down to Rockwood, for a total distance of 35

miles. Two stage companies began to provide connecting Concord stagecoach service from Rockwood to Rico, using the new wagon road. **THE DOLORES NEWS**, published in Rico, reported that the Concord coaches were "...immense and gorgeous." The stagecoaches were pulled by four-horse teams, and the scheduled time for the trip was eight hours. The one-way fare was \$7.00, plus an additional \$1.70 train fare to Durango. The D&RG and the stagecoaches also carried mail and express shipments.

Rico struggled for several years to provide a public school building. Finally, in 1882, donations, a loan and a two-mill property tax provided the money required to construct the new schoolhouse—\$1,239.00—and hire a teacher. Mrs. Robert Darling, the wife of Robert Darling, a Rico pioneer, was hired as the new school teacher. The new school building was described by **THE DOLORES NEWS** as "...that neat and cozy little school house, with its bright paint—its steeple and surroundings." The little building was filled to capacity, and the 1882–1883 school term ran for five months. A closing-day school program for parents and friends, which featured the children, was well received.

The year 1882 was the "year of the smelter" in Rico. The new Grand View Smelter had been in operation for a year and a half. The hands-on operating experience was invaluable, and the output and efficiency of the smelter was raised to a very satisfactory level. The success inspired the management to plan a large expansion program. The new smelter addition would have a concentrator that would make smelting of low-grade ore profitable. A large new building was constructed, and new machinery was installed. Trial runs were successful, and the smelter was soon running smoothly and producing about two tons of bullion every 24 hours.

Successful smelting at the Grand View plant brought competition. Three new smelters were built in Rico in 1882. The Rico Smelting Company's smelter

was built on the south side of town, near the Dolores River. The Santa Clara Mining & Milling Company and the Rico Chemical Reduction Company constructed new smelters north of town, near the head of Horse Gulch. The new smelters had some mechanical problems, and the Rico Smelting Company had financial problems, but the smelters operated well enough to prove that Rico's ore could be efficiently and profitably processed.

RICO BUSINESS ENTERPRISES as of 1882 (from THE DOLORES NEWS):

4 General merchandise stores	4 Billiard halls
1 Hardware house	12 Saloons
2 Banks	2 Wholesale liquor houses
2 Hotels	2 Drug stores
3 Sawmills	1 Cobbler shop
1 Smelter	2 Barbers
2 Brickyards	2 Jewelers
3 Livery stables	1 Gunsmith
3 Blacksmith shops	2 Dressmaker shops
1 Bakery	5 Laundries (1 Chinese)
2 Restaurants	3 Assay offices
2 Meat markets	1 Photograph gallery
1 Boarding house	1 Stage and Express office
1 Bath house	1 Wagon shop
2 Confectionary stores	3 Painters
3 Physicians	5 Ore cabinets
6 Lawyers	and several carpenters
3 Tobacco and cigar stands	7 Grocery stores

1883 With the new smelters on line, Rico's ore production doubled in 1883. Production was geared almost entirely for silver. Gold, copper and lead were also produced, but 88 percent of the total value was silver. Rico was truly a silver camp!

RICO AREA MINE LOCATIONS in 1883 (from THE DOLORES NEWS):

MINE LOCATIONS	NUMBER OF MINES
1 Dolores Mountain	23
2 Telescope Mountain	18
3 Horse Gulch	8
4 Elliot Mountain	12
5 Expectation Mountain	15
6 Printer Boy Hill (on Expectation Mountain)	12
Total.....	88

1884 The candidates in the 1884 presidential election were Grover Cleveland and James Blaine. Democrat Cleveland was seen as a "gold bug," so a silver camp like Rico voted for his opponent. This was no surprise, because the people of Rico felt that the Republicans were more sympathetic to the mining industry, and for many years voted accordingly.

The winter of 1883–1884 produced snow eight feet deep in Rico. The wagon

roads were blockaded from February to June, and Rico ran short of food and coal. Flour sold for as much as \$50 for a 100-pound sack. And mail delivery was very erratic.

1885 A wagon road was built along the Middle Fork of Horse Creek north of Rico to a non-incorporated settlement named "Dunton," on the West Fork of the Dolores River (as the West Dolores River was called at this time). Dunton's economy primarily depended on ranching, but there was also a little mining activity in the area. (See "The Story of Dunton" on Page 29 in this volume.)

1887 David Swickhimer uncovered an incredibly rich blanket of gold and silver at his Enterprise Mine. The Enterprise became the most productive mine in Rico's Pioneer Mining District. (See "David Swickhimer and the Enterprise Mine" on Page 219 in this volume.)

1889 The phenomenal production of silver ore at the Enterprise Mine rejuvenated mine development, and encouraged the discovery of new ore bodies throughout the district. Ore production quadrupled in one year. Almost 80 percent of the total ore value was silver.

1890 The Sherman Silver Purchase Act of 1890 brought about the biggest mining boom that Rico ever knew. This act called for the U.S. government to purchase 4,500,000 ounces of silver each month, and silver was Rico's main product. The purpose of the silver-purchase act was to stabilize the Nation's currency and to maintain the public confidence in paper money by backing it with silver. Theoretically at least, paper money could be redeemed at any time for silver coinage. The amount of silver that the government was to purchase was about equal to the country's production, and the act specified that the silver was to be bought at market price. The result of such large purchases was to increase the market price of silver from 94 cents an ounce to \$1.05 an ounce in 1890. Rico could not have been in a better position—the opportunity to sell large amounts of silver at a high price. Mine owners and managers

had correctly forecasted the boom, and the Rico area's silver production increased from 123,852 ounces in 1888 to 618,615 ounces in 1889, and to 848,785 ounces in 1890. All the mines in the Rico area were in a square about three miles on each side. About 2,000 mining claims were recorded in this area.

Rico was the only incorporated town in the Pioneer Mining District. The official 1890 census showed that the population of Rico had grown to 1,134 people. An additional estimated 400 people lived outside the town limits, but within the mining district. With the population soaring, there was not an empty building to be found. Earlier wooden buildings were replaced with brick and stone structures. Some of these buildings are still standing today (as of 1995). The first church building in Rico was the Congregational Church. It was organized by the Rev. T. C. Dickinson, with financial help from the national organization of the Congregational Church.

(Continued on Page 129)

FROM THE DOLORES NEWS, JANUARY 2, 1886



Private Line Telephones
For two service offices and residences or factory, sold outright. No money taken down of Bell Telephone on all lines under two miles in length. No subscription fee. For all telephones in use. Callers free. A good wanted. Liberty Telephone Co., Denver or Telephone and Electrical Supplies of every description. 125 LaSalle St., Chicago.

OF INTEREST TO RICO

One of the first results of re-organization of the Denver & Rio Grande Railway will be the construction of a branch by way of the Big Bend to Rico. The company could hardly make a more profitable investment.

— *The Durango Herald*

OVERLEAF: An unknown man had climbed a short distance up Expectation Mountain in order to photograph this view of Rico. This presumably was done about 1890, as the Hotel Enterprise was in its original small size. This hotel underwent extensive rebuilding, beginning on March 20, 1891. It is seen as the largest building in Block 13, Lots 11, 12 and 13. The First National Bank building had been erected near the center of this view. Most of the buildings are marked or drawn on the Sanborn Map of 1886. Later, the bottomland along the Dolores River (in the foreground) was sold to the Rio Grande Southern Railroad for its station grounds. In this view you are looking toward the east, with Mantz Avenue in the center and the Silver Creek drainage at the left. The white front of the St. James Hotel can be seen across the street from the Hotel Enterprise.

CHARLES MILLER ENGEL COLLECTION
— COURTESY RACHEL A. HARDWICK

Should the weather remain favorable for outdoor operations, the Southern will be completed to Durango in 40 days. The management will bend all their energies to accomplish this much desired result.

Large Force of Men Move South

OCTOBER 9, 1891—The large force of men under Contractor Ryan have finished here, and yesterday broke camp and took up the line of march down the river a short distance, where Mr. Ryan has another piece of construction work.

Superintendent Ridgway was in Rico this week with his special [train]. While here, he personally superintended the laying of a wye in the Rico yard. When anything in the track line is to be done, Bob sees the things done right.

Locomotive Engineer Visits Editor of The Rico Democrat

OCTOBER 9, 1891—We were pleased to meet Mr. Alex Davidson, an engineer on the Rio Grande, who pulled Superintendent Ridgway's special into Rico this week. Alex is a good boy. Back in the 1880's, Alex put black diamonds in the firebox when the writer was sitting on the right side of a Baldwin.

Mr. Richard Plunkett, a San Juan Indian trader, was in town on Tuesday. While here arrangements were made by which Mr. Plunkett will bring to Rico, as an adjunct to the R.R. celebration on the 15th, a band of Navajo Indians, who will exhibit for the amusement of the large concourse of excursionists who will visit Rico on the formal opening of the railroad.

RGS WYE BEING LAID OUT IN RICO

OCTOBER 16, 1891—Engineer Pees has been busy during the past week laying out [a wye] in the Southern yards.

THE STORY OF RICO AND THE PIONEER MINING DISTRICT

A Chronology of Events

(Continued From Page 105)

1891 The first Rio Grande Southern train arrived in Rico during 1891. Ever since Rico's incorporation in 1879, growth and prosperity in the area had been held back by the high cost and unreliability of transportation to the outside world. During

1891 all the town's hope for ending its isolation depended on the construction of the RGS railroad. The RGS had a contract with Rico's city council for land and a right-of-way in town provided that the railroad should reach Rico by November 1, 1890. It was especially galling to Rico residents when the RGS completed its branch to Telluride in 1890, but failed to reach Rico during that year.

Perky little Otto Mears had achieved what most people—and some experts—considered impossible. He had built 170 miles of narrow-gauge railroad through country that was so rugged that only three miles of track was on level ground. Little locomotives struggled hour after hour on the 167 miles, climbing over four divides, each one of which led their trains to new watersheds. Otto Mears' political and financial skills also were truly remarkable.

(Continued on Page 207)

AN ARTICLE FROM THE RICO DEMOCRAT...

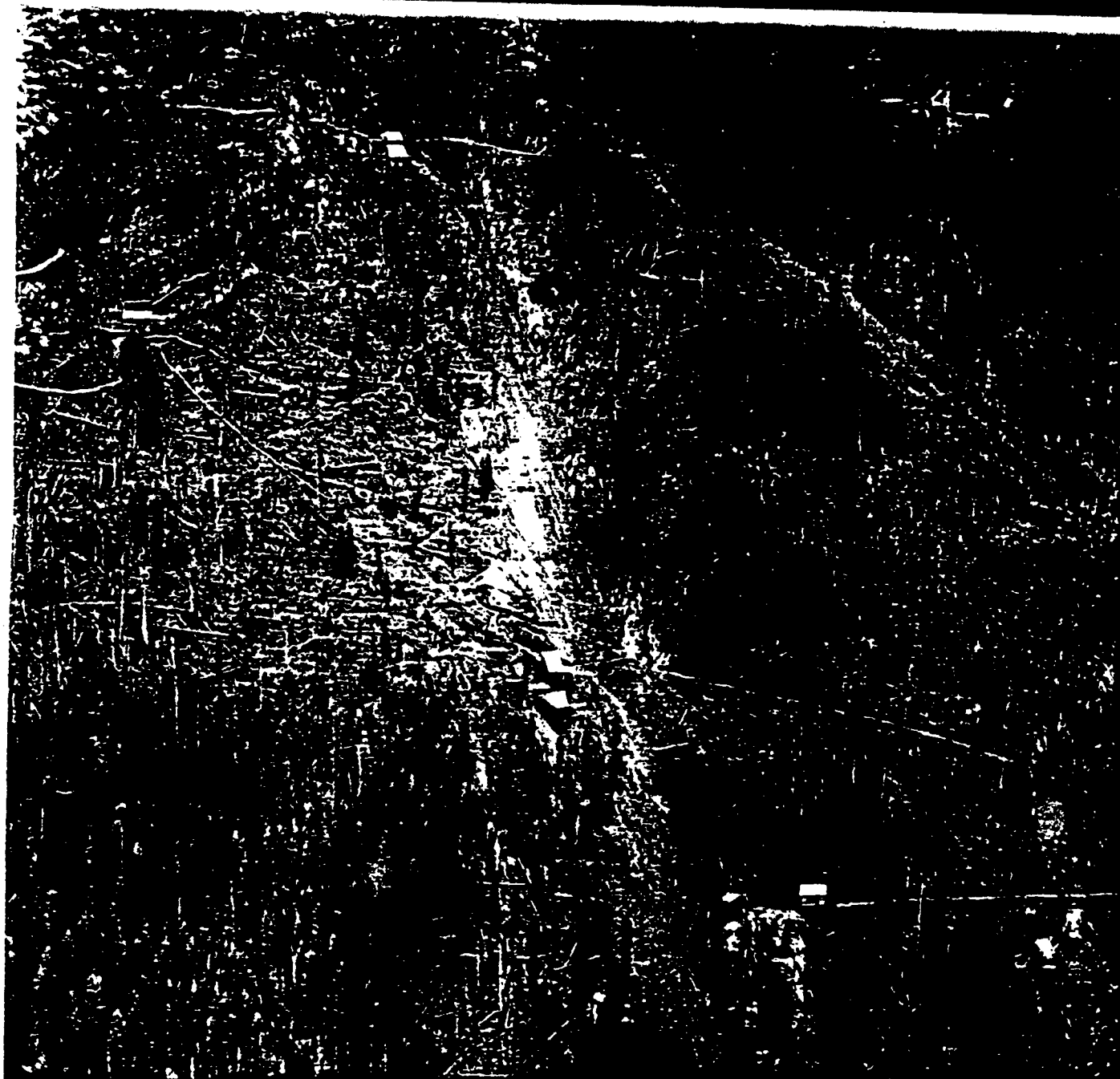
FIRE IN FIRST NATIONAL BANK

May 8, 1891—Monday evening, about 8:00 o'clock, an alarm of fire was given, which was promptly responded to by the [volunteer] fire department. The fire was located in the First National Bank building, over the suite of rooms occupied by Kincaid & Williams, lawyers. Investigation showed, however, that the burning out of a [stove] flue was the cause of the alarm. No damage was done to the building or contents further than that occasioned by a torrent of water turned into the flue from the top, which found an escape through a lateral flue-hole into the consultation room of the firm above named, which ruined the carpets and did some damage to a portion of their library. On the same floor is the offices of T. J. Tarsney, W. B. Hess, Charles McLaughlin and A. H. Mundee. The libraries, books and furniture was removed to places of safety, and but little damage was sustained except that above named. The manner in which the fire boys performed for the first time under Chief Gault, and the orderly manner in which they carried out his orders, reflects the greatest credit upon them, and is an assurance to our citizens of efficient service at their hands in the event of a fire.

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F. L. RANSOME PHOTOS - U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY COLLECTION

TWO MINE TRAMHOUSES were clinging precariously to the precipitous slope of Allyn Gulch. The upper building was at the portal of the Little Maggie Mine, and it is connected to the lower structure by an aerial tramway. The lower building was at the adit of the Black Hawk Mine, and was the upper tramhouse for the aerial tramway to the ore bins located near the end of the Black Hawk spur. The Little Maggie Mine also was the property of the Black Hawk mining company. The material sliding down the gulch was tailings from both mines. (Enlargement above from Page 206.)

DURING THE YEAR 1900, F. L. Ransome furnished the photograph printed at the left to the U.S. Geological Survey of the Interior Department. It shows Allyn Gulch, the location of the Black Hawk Mine. Mr. Ransome shot his picture from the ridge of Nigger Baby Hill, northeast of Rico.

THE STORY OF RICO AND THE PIONEER MINING DISTRICT

By William A. Graves

(Continued From Page 129)

1892 The Rio Grande Southern's division point at Rico was a busy operation in 1892, and this helped to make the town a bustling place. The RGS was organized into two divisions, with Rico as the division point. That meant that many railroaders lived in Rico. An extensive rail-



ORVAL L. JAHNKE COLLECTION

ONE OPENING of the Argentine Mine and tailings dump was located above Silver Creek, and it was photographed at the time when mules were used to pull the mine's tramway cars. These little four-wheeled dump cars had been coupled together, ready to be hauled into the mine. The thoughtful miners had attached a carbide lamp on the front of the harness, aimed at the ground so the mule could see where he was stepping, in order to avoid fallen rocks.

road yard and engine-servicing terminal was constructed to handle the railroad traffic and maintain the equipment. The RGS contributed a good-sized payroll to the town's economy.

After the RGS arrived in Rico, the life style of the town changed dramatically. No longer did the residents have to depend on freight wagons struggling over snowy or muddy roads to get necessities during the winter. The days of shortages and \$50.00 sacks of flour or \$3.00-a-

dozen eggs were a thing of the past. The RGS would have more than its share of troubles, but to Rico residents, it was their lifeline.

The benefit of lower transportation costs was immediate. Freight rates that had been \$50.00 per ton in 1880 were only \$8.00 or \$9.00 per ton in 1892 on the RGS. Production of gold and silver doubled in one year. Lead production tripled. There was no official census in 1892; however, unofficial estimates re-

(Continued on Page 218)



ported that Rico's population doubled or tripled, with 5,000 people living in the district and 2,000 men working in the mines. It was reported that 599 mines were operating in 1892. Many new substantial buildings were constructed, some of which are still standing. These new buildings included the Burley Block, the Dolores County Courthouse (a brick structure built in 1893), the Dey building, the Masonic Lodge building, the public school, the RGS depot (built in 1891) and the first enginehouse (a two-stall wooden structure), the Rico Mercantile Store, the Rico State Bank and the Silver League Theatre.

Glasgow Avenue became Rico's main business street early in the town's history. The present-day state highway (Colorado

Highway 145) passes through Rico on Glasgow Avenue. A relatively small red-light district was centered around River Street. Although bordellos were illegal, the so-called "Female Boarding House" was not harassed by local authorities.

The Enterprise Branch of the RGS was built in 1892 to reach Rico's two most productive mines, the Enterprise, on Newman Hill, and the Black Hawk, located on the Silver Creek watershed. The Enterprise Mine originally was owned by David Swickhimer (and other partners), and it was the discovery of rich ore at the Enterprise that had set off the mining boom in Rico in 1887. The Black Hawk Mine had been claimed in 1878 by R. C. Darling, John Glasgow and E. A. Robinson. Otto Mears was also an investor in



DELL A. MCCOY PHOTOS

IN THE EARLY PART of June, as aspen buds began to leaf out, a hike was taken along the old Enterprise Branch grade to the end-of-track at the mine opening. The shed covering the mine track was still standing, at the right. The ore bins, at the left, were in ruins.

THE ENTERPRISE MINE entrance shed was photographed in 1966, showing the north side, as the photographer stood next to the abandoned narrow-gauge grade of the Enterprise Branch. The old structure that was the ore house was almost unrecognizable.

the Black Hawk mining operation.

The Enterprise portal site, also known as the site of the Group Tunnel, looks down on the town, about 400 feet below. The nearby Rico-Aspen Mine was owned by the Rico-Aspen Consolidated Mining Company, which had been formed in 1891, and whose president was the prominent banker and railroad builder, David Moffat.

Rivalry between the Enterprise and the Rico-Aspen became violent in a disputed underground area, near the property boundaries. Enterprise miners set off sulfur fires in the disputed tunnels, but not before the Rico-Aspen miners had already extracted most of the ore. The Enterprise eventually won the dispute, after lengthy litigation. Both mines were good producers, and after completion of

the spur, the Enterprise Mine regularly shipped about 150 cars a month, and the Rico-Aspen Mine was reported to have shipped about 60 cars a month.

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DAVID SWICKHIMER AND THE ENTERPRISE MINE

By William A. Graves

THE ENTERPRISE MINE became the dominant mine in Rico, Colorado, in the late 1880's, and this mine sparked the biggest mining boom that the town has ever had. In three years, annual silver production went from less than 100,000 ounces to over 600,000 ounces. As a result, Rico's population increased rapidly, and all kinds of things were scarce.

The Enterprise Mine paid to have a five-mile railroad branch constructed by the Rio Grande Southern, so that ore could be shipped directly from the mine. The Enterprise Branch had switchbacks and 5.0-percent grades, and it terminated near the mine's tunnel portal. The Enterprise was a major shipper for the RGS, and it often provided five carloads of ore per day. The last year of operation at the mine is not known; however, freight cars are shown on the branch in an 1899 photograph. In any case, the reported date for the abandonment of the RGS trackage to the mine is 1900.

THE STORY OF RICO AND THE PIONEER MINING DISTRICT

By William A. Graves

(Continued From Page 219)

1893 Prosperity in Rico reached a peak early in 1893. Driven by the Federal government's purchases of silver, over \$2-million worth of silver was produced that year. In addition, the production of gold and lead also peaked in 1893. However, this over-production of silver at Rico was

(Continued on Page 226)



C. W. PURINGTON PHOTO - U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY COLLECTION

THIS PICTURE WAS TAKEN during the summer of 1896. It documents the flourishing mining activity that took place near the base of Dolores Mountain—on the slopes of Newman Hill, just prior to the turn of the century. The same photograph has been enlarged and printed on the following two pages, in order to better show the detail in this scene. The Enterprise Mining Company's Group Tunnel was shipping five boxcar loads of ore per day at the time this photograph was taken. Looking at the ore bins, two loaded

boxcars had been rolled down from the ore chutes, and one remained at the tipple for loading. At the same time, two empty boxcars were at the end of "empty track," waiting to be eased down for loading. The Vestal shaft was the highest location in this illustration, and the Jumbo was a short distance below it. Midway in this picture are huge mine dumps from the Newman Group of mines. At the right-hand edge of the view is the Syndicate mining property, with its support structures.

also taking place throughout Colorado and other Western states, and over-production caused the price of silver to drop. The Federal government's large horde of silver also was seen as a threat to the gold standard of the Federal Reserve System. Bankers began to lose faith in paper currency, and hundreds of banks in the U.S. began to close their doors. This crisis was blamed on the inflation of the silver price, and the so-called "Silver Panic of 1893" caused the Sherman Silver Purchase Act to be repealed on October 31, 1893. The end of the government purchases was a great disaster for Rico. Hundreds of mines in the Rico area closed their operations, and the miners departed. Many merchants also closed their businesses and left town. Although Rico survived, it had a greatly reduced population, and it never could recover its earlier booming vitality.

1894 The price of silver fell to 63 cents per ounce in 1894, and ore production in the Rico mining district dropped to less than one-half of what it was during the previous year. Traffic on the RGS also decreased to less than one half of what it was in 1893, and many railroad employees were laid off or had their wages cut.

1895 Production of ore continued to decrease, and the output in 1895 was only about one-third of 1894's production. Mining had also slowed because the best ore deposits at the Enterprise, Rico-Aspen and other Newman Hill mines

(Continued on Page 244)

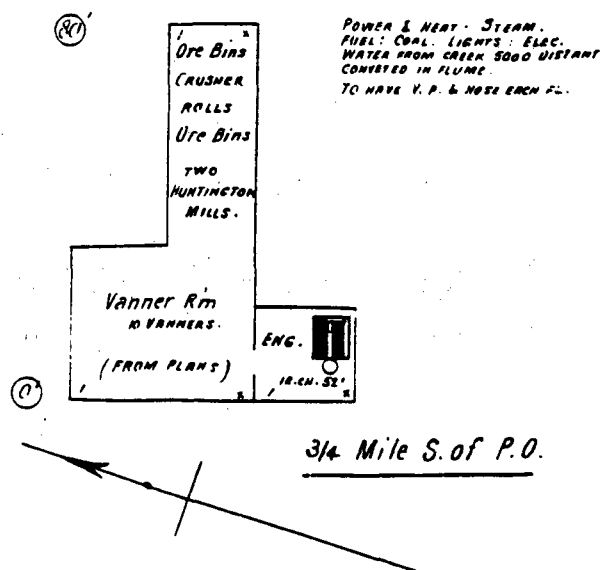
COLORADO MILLING & CONCENTRATING COMPANY WET PROCESS MILL

See Pages 232, 234 and 236

SANBORN

MAPPING AND GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SERVICE

— 1899 —



Mountain

Side

1 1/2 Miles S of P.O.

(Temporarily Closed)

RICO & ASPEN CONSOLIDATED MINING

MINING ROAD

ROAD

RICO & ASPEN CONSOLIDATED MINING COMPANY

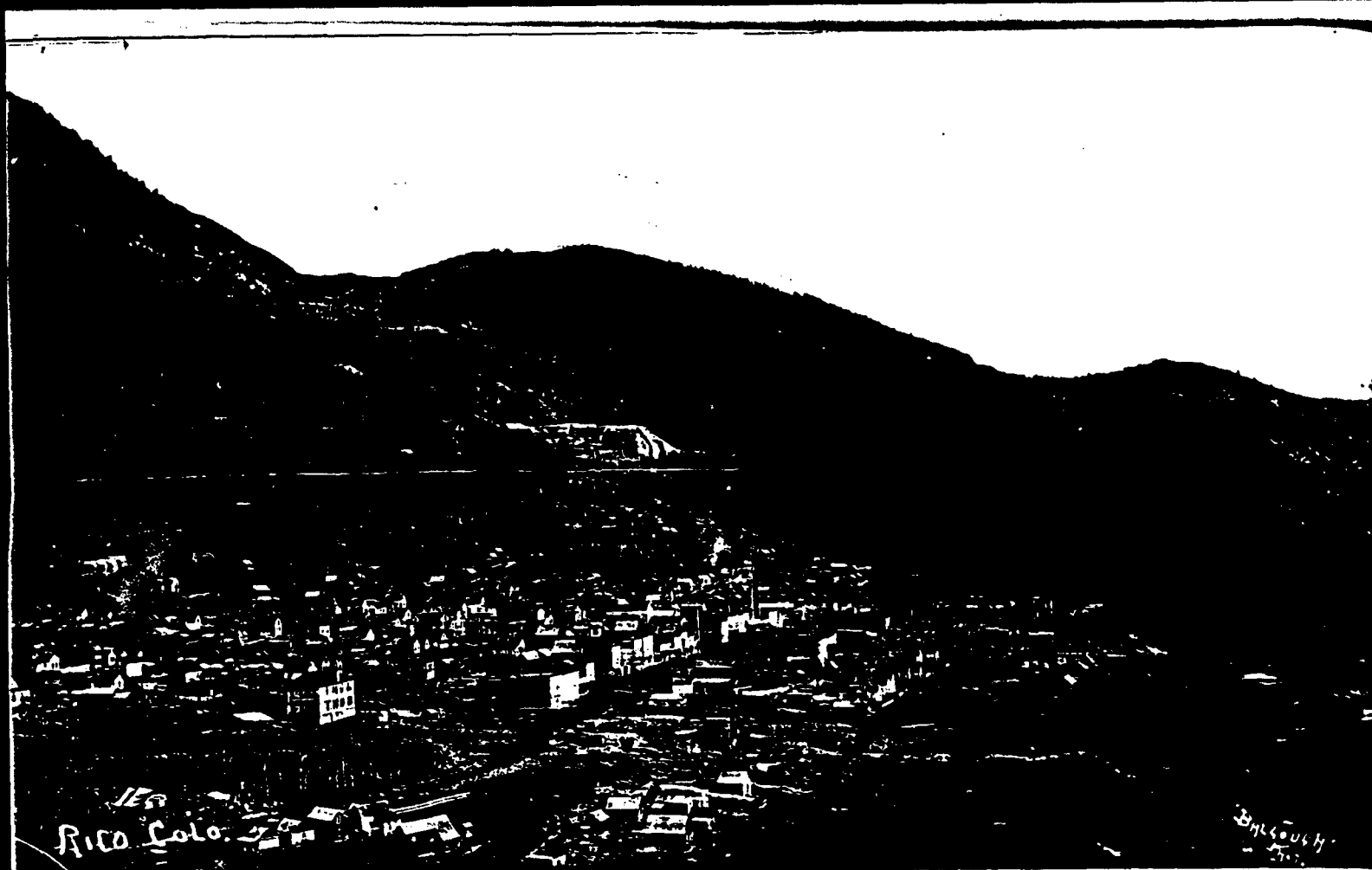
See Picture Pages 232, 235 and 237

SANBORN

MAPPING AND GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SERVICE

— 1899 —

Dump



MONTE BALLOUGH PHOTO - COURTESY MARGARET BALLOUGH PALMER

THIS PHOTOGRAPH, taken by one of Rico's resident photographers, was shot in 1900, prior to the construction of the Pro Patria mill. This large mill was later constructed at the end of Mantz Avenue.

THE STORY OF RICO AND THE PIONEER MINING DISTRICT

By William A. Graves

(Continued From Page 226)

were just about mined-out. The RGS transferred the majority of its stocks and bonds to the D&RG, and in return, the D&RG acquired much of the Rio Grande Southern's indebtedness. These moves made the D&RG the principal owner of the RGS, and the receivership ended on December 1, 1895.

1896 Recovery of zinc from Rico ore was reported for the first time in 1896, and 30,000 pounds were produced. In later years, zinc became the mainstay of production for the district.

1897 The price of silver was down to 63 cents per ounce. Some small-scale mining and two stamp mills kept Rico alive.

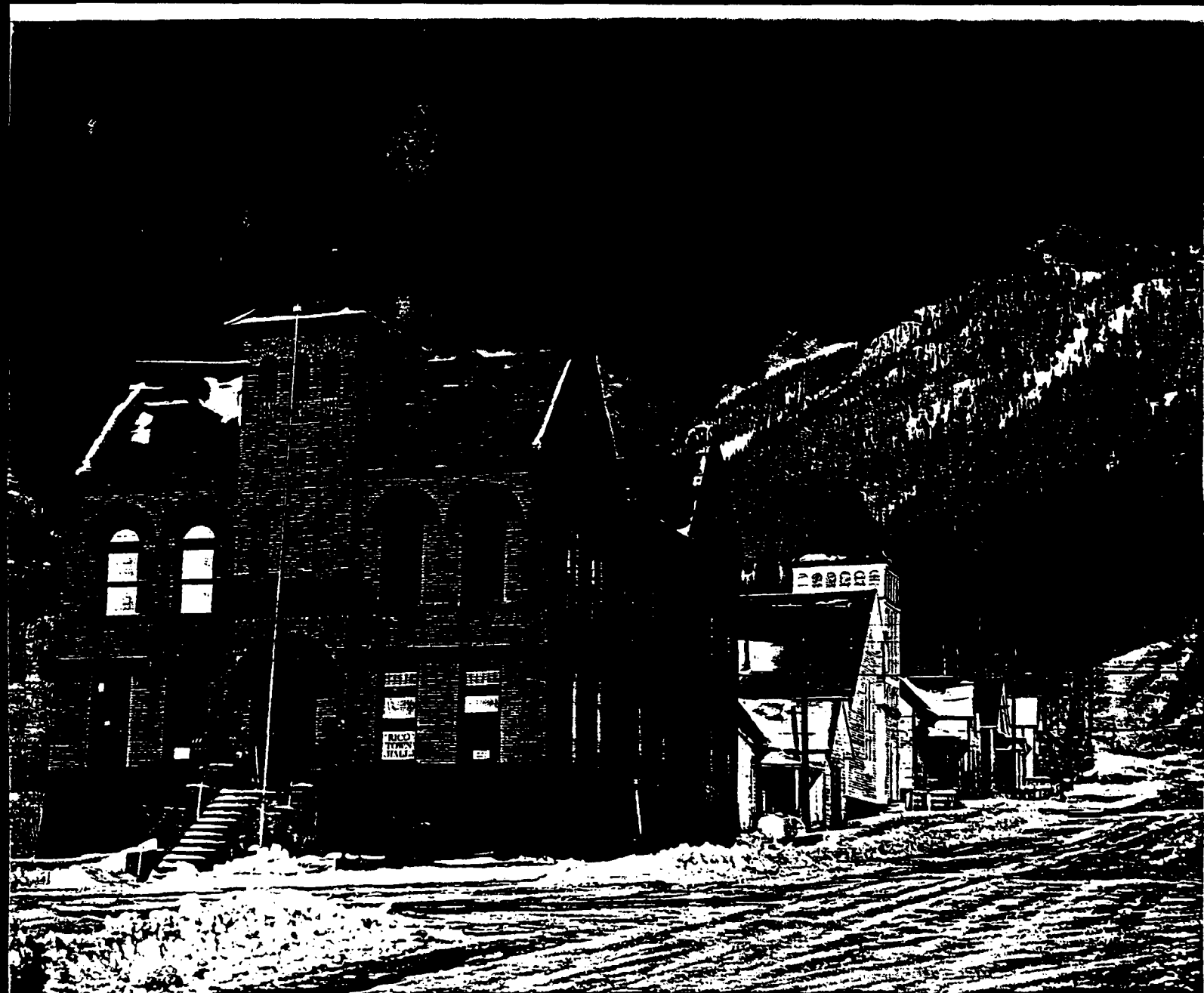
1898 Mining had a brief revival, and several mines were reopened. About a dozen businesses and several professional of-

TO ENHANCE the details in this picture, it has been enlarged by 300 percent and reproduced on the next three pages. The northeast section of Rico appears in the first frame and shows the homes of that time. The schoolhouse built in 1892, along with two outhouses, is at the lower right. The home of Charles Engel, Sr., stands alone near the center of the view.

fices kept their doors open. Unfortunately, the Silver League Theatre, located on Glasgow Avenue, was destroyed by fire in 1898. The theater had been used by traveling road shows, as well as a local performing company, to put on plays, musicals and variety shows (the very popular "Gay Nineties" vaudeville performances, which featured lively songs, dances, skits, acrobatic acts, pretty girls in colorful costumes, etc.).

1899 This was a slow year for Rico, as the 1898 mining revival slowed down.

(Continued on Page 254)



DELL A. McCOY PHOTO

THE RICO TOWN HALL currently occupies the former Dolores County Courthouse (as of 1996). In this winter view, taken in 1990, the old Congre-

gational Church still stands on Mantz Avenue, and a glimpse of the former Charles Miller Engel home is beyond Commercial Street, near the fire plug.

1900 Rico's population and ore production continued to decline. According to the official 1900 census, the town's population was down to 811 people. The yearly total value of ore production was only \$173,817, a drop of 90 percent in seven years. The only ore produced in the district was mined by small-scale operators, who leased small areas of the big mines.

1901 A major consolidation of Rico's mine holdings came about in 1901. A newly formed corporation, known as the United Rico Mines Company, had its main offices in New York City. The new com-

pany acquired most of the major properties in the district, including the Atlantic Cable, Cross, Enterprise, Grand View, Hope and Rico-Aspen claims. New ideas for the milling of lead-and-zinc ores helped to keep the district busy. The Rico Mining & Milling Company constructed a zinc-concentration mill, which used 20 stamps, 6 Wilfley tables and some newly developed devices called magnetic separators. These separators were intended to divide the ore into its lead, copper, iron and zinc components.

(Continued on Page 264)

THE STORY OF RICO AND THE PIONEER MINING DISTRICT

By William A. Graves

(Continued From Page 254)

1902 David Swickhimer's Pro Patria Company also was interested in the new type of separators, and a new concentration mill was built to use them. This mill was located at the foot of Mantz Avenue, and it was connected to the mine portal by a 3,600-foot-long aerial tramway. The RGS built a spur to serve the new Pro Patria (Spanish for "For Fatherland") mill. Although production at the new mill was started late in 1902, the milling results were not satisfactory, and the mill was little used until 1908.

1903 Rico's only major fire burned the Hotel Enterprise to the ground in 1903. This hotel was a three-story building, and it measured about 60 feet in width and 75 feet in length. The grand Hotel Enterprise was the largest hostelry in town, and it had 62 rooms, not counting rooms in the Hotel Annex or other adjacent hotel buildings. The Enterprise had been the host hotel for the big banquet that celebrated the arrival of the RGS in Rico 12 years earlier. Unfortunately, this historic hotel was never rebuilt after the fire. Several smaller buildings nearby also caught fire and burned down at the same time. (See the complete story of the disastrous Hotel Enterprise fire in **THE RICO NEWS** article printed elsewhere in this volume.)

The Hotel Enterprise had been a favorite meeting place for Rico residents, and its loss lowered the town's morale. Ore production was down, the town's population was down, and over 60 percent of Rico's commercial businesses had closed their doors—and then, the Hotel Enterprise burned down.

1906 Rico's economy began to depend more on the production of base metals. For the first time, the annual value of zinc production was greater than the value of silver output.

1907 The yearly value of metal production in the Rico area was only \$56,283, and it was the lowest annual amount since 1880.

David Swickhimer's Rico State Bank failed as a result of the severe "Panic of 1907." Ignoring the advice of business associates, Swickhimer used his personal fortune to pay off the bank's depositors, a loss that financially ruined him. He was called Colorado's "most honest man" as a result of using all his wealth to pay back the Rico State Bank's depositors. Following David Swickhimer's bankruptcy, the United Rico Mines obtained a controlling interest in the Pro Patria property; however, this company went into bankruptcy itself four years later.

1908 The Pro Patria mill started production again and helped to boost the output of lead and zinc concentrates in the district. However, the mill was destroyed by fire during October of 1908, and it remained inactive for the next five years.

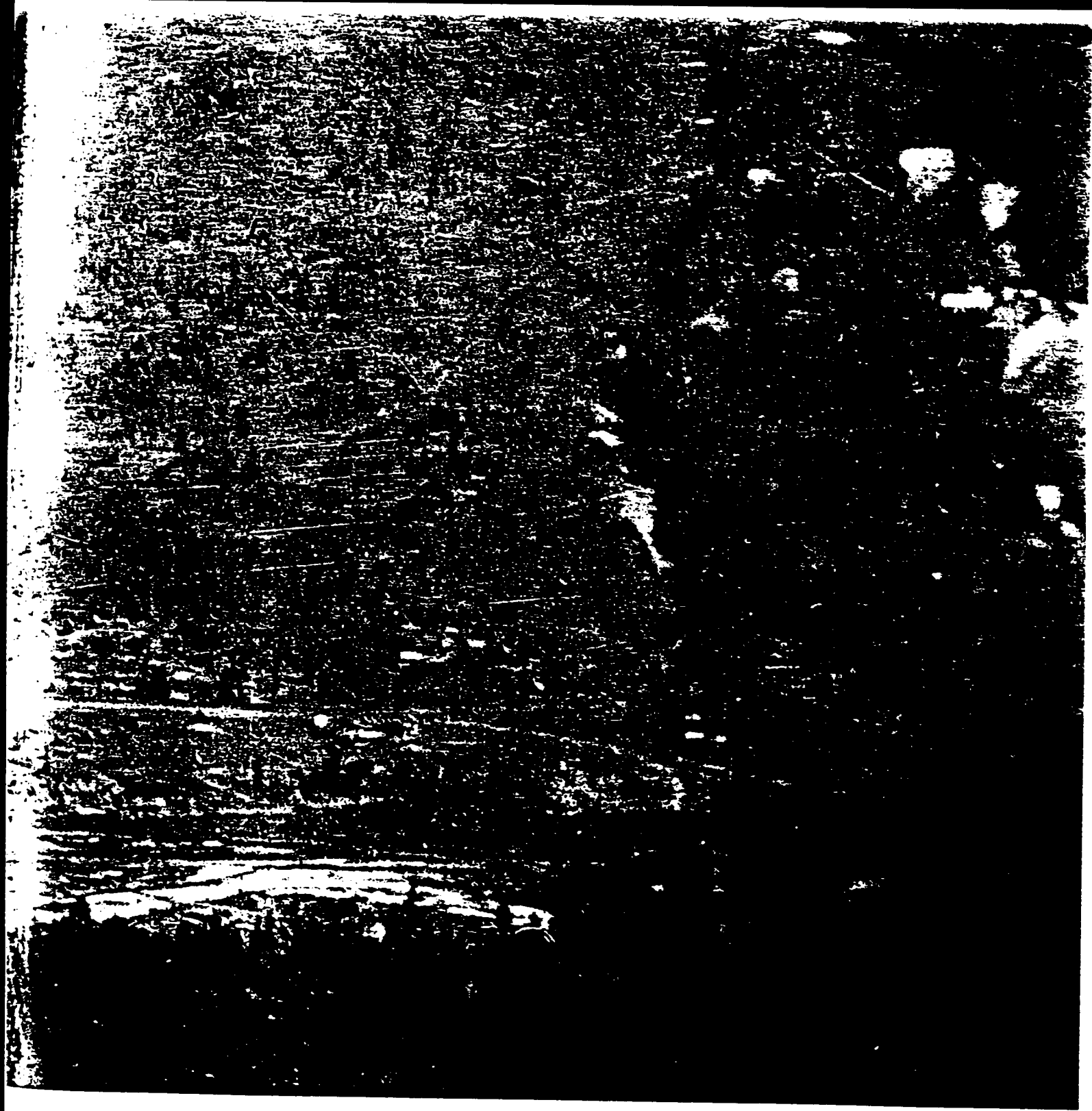
1909 Heavy rains during September of 1909 caused the Trout Lake dam to fail, and the San Miguel River washed out a lot of the Rio Grande Southern's track. This kept Telluride isolated for months, and it meant that through train service was interrupted.

1910 This was another slow year for Rico. The town lost about half of its population during the 10-year period between 1900 and 1910. In the same period, ore production also dropped about one half.

(Continued on Page 333)



GOLD FILIGREE PASS FROM OTTO MEARS
MORRIS ABBOTT COLLECTION - COURTESY E. J. HALEY



THE STORY OF RICO AND THE PIONEER MINING DISTRICT

By William A. Graves

(Continued From Page 264)

1911 The flood of October, 1911, was even more costly for the RGS than the one that

occurred during 1909. Three months of heavy rain and a snowstorm that occurred during early autumn produced a disastrous flood along the Dolores River. Some 50 miles of RGS track north and south of Rico was washed out. Repairs cost the railroad \$174,000, and the main-line north of Rico was out of service for 3½ months. Silver Creek in Rico was

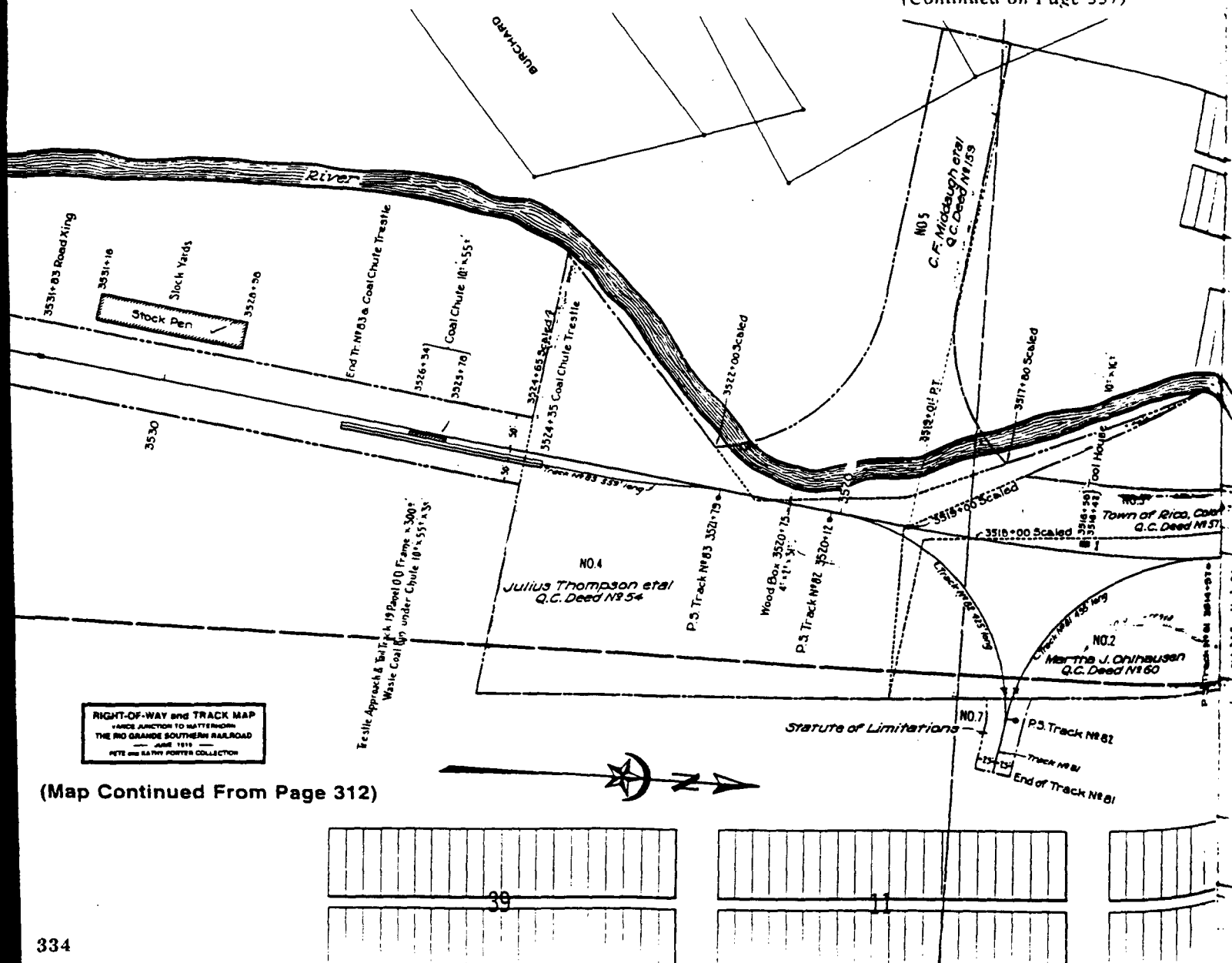
particularly violent and destroyed everything in its path, to a width of 200 feet. Although the Dolores River flooded to some degree almost every year, the 1911 flood probably was the most disastrous flooding ever to hit the RGS.

1912 Many countries began to buildup their military forces, as the threat of war in Europe became stronger. The production of base metals—copper, lead and zinc—from the Rico mines experienced a big increase. Copper was the dominant metal, and undoubtedly it was used to produce brass for cartridge and shell casings. The mines of the Rico area produced 689,915 pounds of copper in 1912, and this amount was greater than Rico's total copper production for the preceding 10 years.

Much of this copper was mined at the Wellington group of mines, about two miles north of Rico, in an area known as the C.H.C. Hill, a location named for C. H. Carpenter. Fred Price of Salt Lake City formed the Rico-Argentine Company, which leased the old Black Hawk Mine. This company was active intermittently in the Rico area for over 60 years.

1913 With the threat of war coming ever closer in Europe, ore production in the Rico area took a very big boost, to over \$500,000. The value of this production was greater than any year's production since 1894. The value of this ore was about evenly divided among silver, copper, lead and zinc. The Pro Patria mill was remodeled and operated for a short time.

(Continued on Page 337)



(Map Continued From Page 312)



RICHARD H. KINDIG COLLECTION

"HOMEWARD BOUND" might well be the title of this photograph. The section hands, with dinner pails in hand, wearily left their train behind. They trudged through the snow toward the comfort of their homes for a hot meal and a soothing soak in a warm bath. They had been "up the hill," shoveling snow until their snowfighting train was able to break through the blockade. Now, it was time to coal and water the locomotives behind RGS Plow-Flanger 02. It looks as though the water gauge on the Rico tank was near the bottom, indicating the tank was nearly full. This picture may have been taken during the severe snow blockade of 1913-1914.

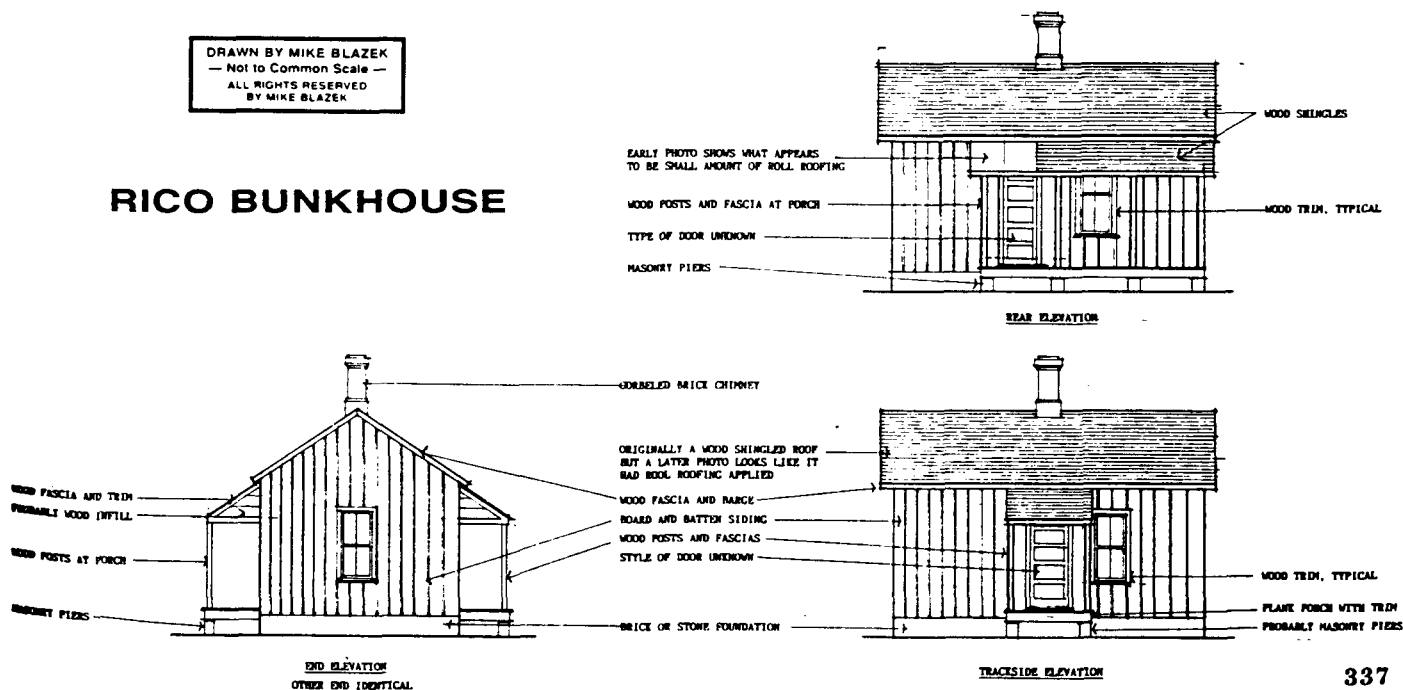
1914 For some unknown reason (or reasons), production of all metals in the Rico district took a big drop in 1914.

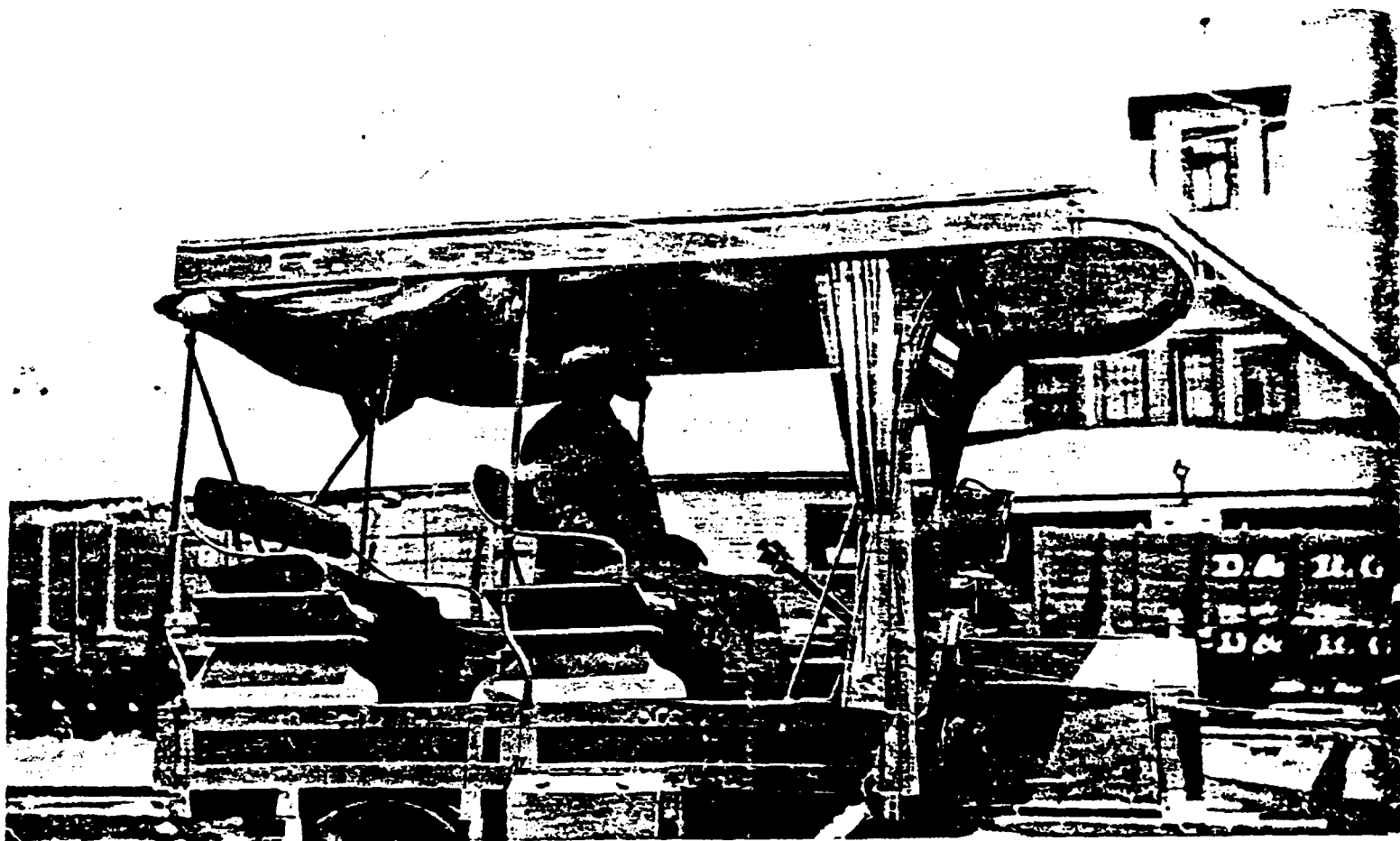
1915 During 1915, copper production in the Rico area reached an all-time high of over one-million pounds. This yearly production of copper was never mined before or since. However, lead and zinc shipments were down.

(Continued on Page 342)

DRAWN BY MIKE BLAZEK
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RICO BUNKHOUSE





DAVID AND FAYE WOLFORD COLLECTION

A RELATIVE OF HENRY WOLFORD, David Wolford, had the honor of trying out the front seat of Walter D. Lee's inspection car, lettered "R. G. S. No. 1." The Model "T" conversion was in Rico during either 1914 or 1915. The unnecessary steering wheel had been removed, and canvas side curtains had been installed. W. D. Lee was the su-

perintendent of the RGS at this time. He had been photographed during 1913, near the Ophir Loop, featured in Volume IV of *THE R • G • S STORY*—as mentioned above—with the accompanying history concerning the happenings of this car. Notice the Rico depot in the background, which had been repainted in buff and brown by this time.

1916 Most of the patented mining claims in Rico's Pioneer Mining District were acquired by the Syndicate Mining & Milling Company.

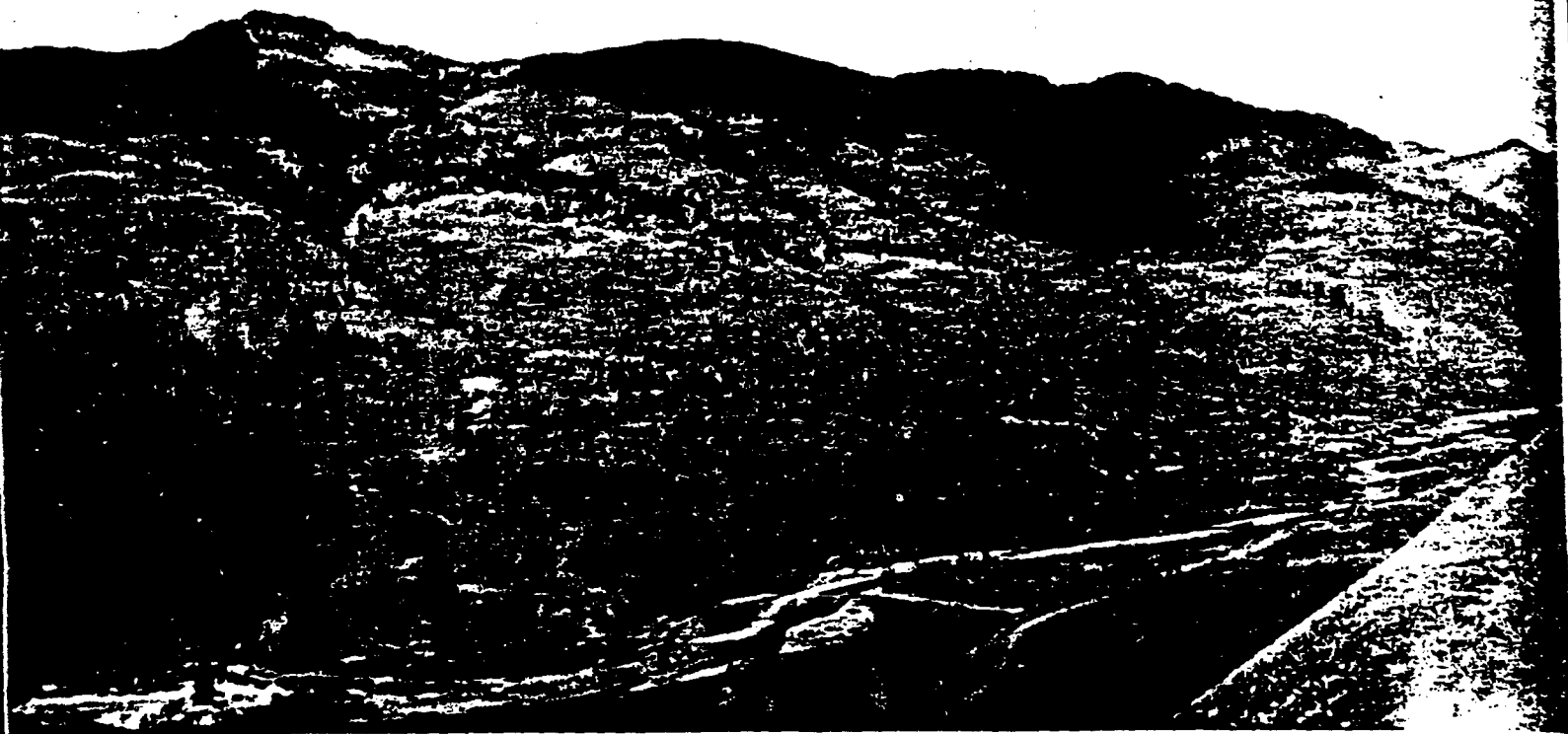
1917 The price of silver, copper and lead increased as the United States entered World War I. The Rico district produced over \$500,000 in silver and base metals.

1918 The price of silver rose to \$1.00 per ounce for the first time since 1890.

1919 After the end of World War I, most of the world's attention was focussed on disarmament. Metal prices fell, and metal production in the Rico area dropped to one-third of the 1918 levels. Robert Pellet, a mining promoter, and his wife, Elizabeth Eyre Pellet, moved to Rico at this time. They would become very important residents for Rico, in their at-

HENRY WOLFORD stood beside Walter D. Lee's Model "T" Ford rail car, which had been converted from a secondhand automobile as RGS No. 1—officially called an inspection car. The car had undergone some modifications, which can be seen in this picture taken in 1915. The original headlights were replaced by one large headlight (with a curved lens), centered at the base of the windshield. This light may have been a carbide gas lamp judging from its domed top (with side vents), and the tube coming through the fire wall is of sufficient diameter to be a carbide-gas hose instead of an electric wire. Two smaller headlights had been mounted in the fire wall, along with a horn, at the right. (The two smaller lights may have been used as classification lights.) Another change was the removal of the foot boards over the front wheels, while the head end part of the roof had been filled-in with a curved down section, and some type of material closed the open spaces on each side of the windshield. The inspection car had no electric starter—it had to be hand-cranked. (See Pages 82, 83 and 123 of Volume IV in this series for other views of this car.)

DAVID AND FAYE WOLFORD COLLECTION



CHARLES MILLER ENGEL COLLECTION -
COURTESY RACHEL A. HARDWICK

THE SILVER SWAN mining property, located about three-quarters of a mile south of Rico, had tunneled into the base of Expectation Mountain at the edge of the Dolores River, near its confluence with Sulphur Creek. The summit of Expectation Mountain is on the skyline (at the left), west of the river valley. Upstream, toward Rico, the engine-coaling facility used by the RGS is visible, at the south end of the yard. The southern end of Rico is at the far right.

tempts to keep some of the mines in operation. (See *A Tenacious Woman... Elizabeth Eyre Pellet* in Volume VI.)

1920 Many people left Rico for lack of employment. By the end of 1920, only about 150 people remained. Many houses were abandoned, and many were torn down to salvage their lumber. However, two general stores, a grocery store, a meat market and a pool hall kept their doors open—even though the ore-processing mills closed down.

1921 Ore production was the lowest in 40 years, and the remaining residents in town barely survived. Rico had neither a resident doctor nor a clergyman, and the community made do with occasional visits for their needs. Dances and social events helped hold the town together, and they helped to keep the people's spirits up.

(Continued on Page 415)

ACCIDENTS IN THE RICO AREA

By Robert W. Richardson

WHEN THE RGS LINE was built into Rico, the contractors were in a hurry, and they ignored the spring floods of the Dolores River. So, the yard, wye and wooden engine-house were constructed in the only flat place available, next to the river. Worse yet, both of the approach tracks to the tail of the wye crossed the river! If several sunny days came together during the spring, with no clouds to keep the temperature down, the snow melt would flood the Dolores Valley. Such a flood came in 1911, which just about wiped out the entire yard of the RGS, structures and wye. The railroad had no choice but to rebuild in the same area; however, the wye was moved to the opposite side of the main-line. The new wye made use of a slight draw, where the tail ended at the steep embankment below Rico's business district.

Luckily, the railroad's newly completed brick enginehouse, with three run-through tracks, escaped destruction, but the old enginehouse was damaged so badly that it was summarily torn down. Only the old lead

(Continued on Page 354)

Mile by Mile to...

The Rico Division Point

*The End of the First District
and the Beginning of the
Second District*

The St. Louis Tunnel Period at Rico



No. 9

THE STORY OF RICO AND THE PIONEER MINING DISTRICT

By William A. Graves

(Continued From Page 344 in Chapter 8)

1922 A young mining engineer by the name of Duane Kline visited Rico. He represented the St. Louis Smelting & Refining Company (the StLS&R) of St. Louis, Missouri. The StLS&R used sulfuric acid to process lead from their Missouri mines, and Kline's job in Rico was to evaluate the iron-pyrite deposits on Telescope Mountain. He found the pyrite deposits to be rich in iron and sulfur. Silver, lead and zinc values also were present, and the St. Louis Smelting & Refining Company negotiated a contract with the owner, the Rico Mining & Re-

duction Company, to develop the property. During the following year, development began on the St. Louis Tunnel. The portal was located about one mile north of Rico, on the east side of the Dolores River. A narrow-gauge electric tramway (i.e., a mine railroad) was to be built to "tram" (haul) the pyrite out of the tunnel.

1923 Robert Pellet hired a few men and reopened the Princeton Mine on C.H.C. Hill. This was the beginning of Bob Pellet's efforts to save the old mining town from becoming just another deserted Colorado ghost town.

Bob Pellet did not have the capital to work any of the Rico mines on a large scale. However, after several rather unsuccessful attempts, Bob negotiated a contract with the International Smelting & Refining Company, a subsidiary of the great Anaconda Company. With this



CHARLES MILLER ENGEL COLLECTION -
COURTESY RACHEL A. HARDWICK

THE SOUTHBOUND passenger train of the RGS had reached Rico on a snowy Easter Sunday during 1922. The engineer was at the right, holding his oil can, while the fireman was standing next to him. The conductor had climbed up on the snow-covered locomotive, hanging onto a grab iron. Their trip must have been an unnerving experience, as the little engine had to buck through snowdrifts on Lizard Head Pass. Chances are, if the locomotive did not have a pilot plow, the train would have stalled somewhere on the northern side of the pass. The young man in front of the engine probably had been hired by the roadmaster to keep the yard's switches in operating condition during freezing weather, as well as to work at other tasks in the Rico yard, including the removal of snow from the locomotive before the train continued on its run. Notice the railing along the top of the Railway Post Office car, used by trainmen to hold onto while walking on the roof while going to and from the engine, since passage through the RPO car was not possible.

powerful backing, Bob formed the Falcon Mining Company and reopened and reworked the Falcon and Yellow Jacket mines on Nigger Baby Hill, under a lease-and-option arrangement with the Syndicate Mining & Milling Company. 1924 Bob Pellet was elected as the mayor of Rico—for the first of three consecutive terms. He continued to expand his mining operations, and he formed a second mining firm, the Pell-Eyre Mining Company. Bob also secured options to work the Atlantic Cable and Shamrock mines, as well as the Pro Patria mill. Over \$350,000 worth of ore was shipped. Lead and zinc predominated.

(Continued on Page 436)

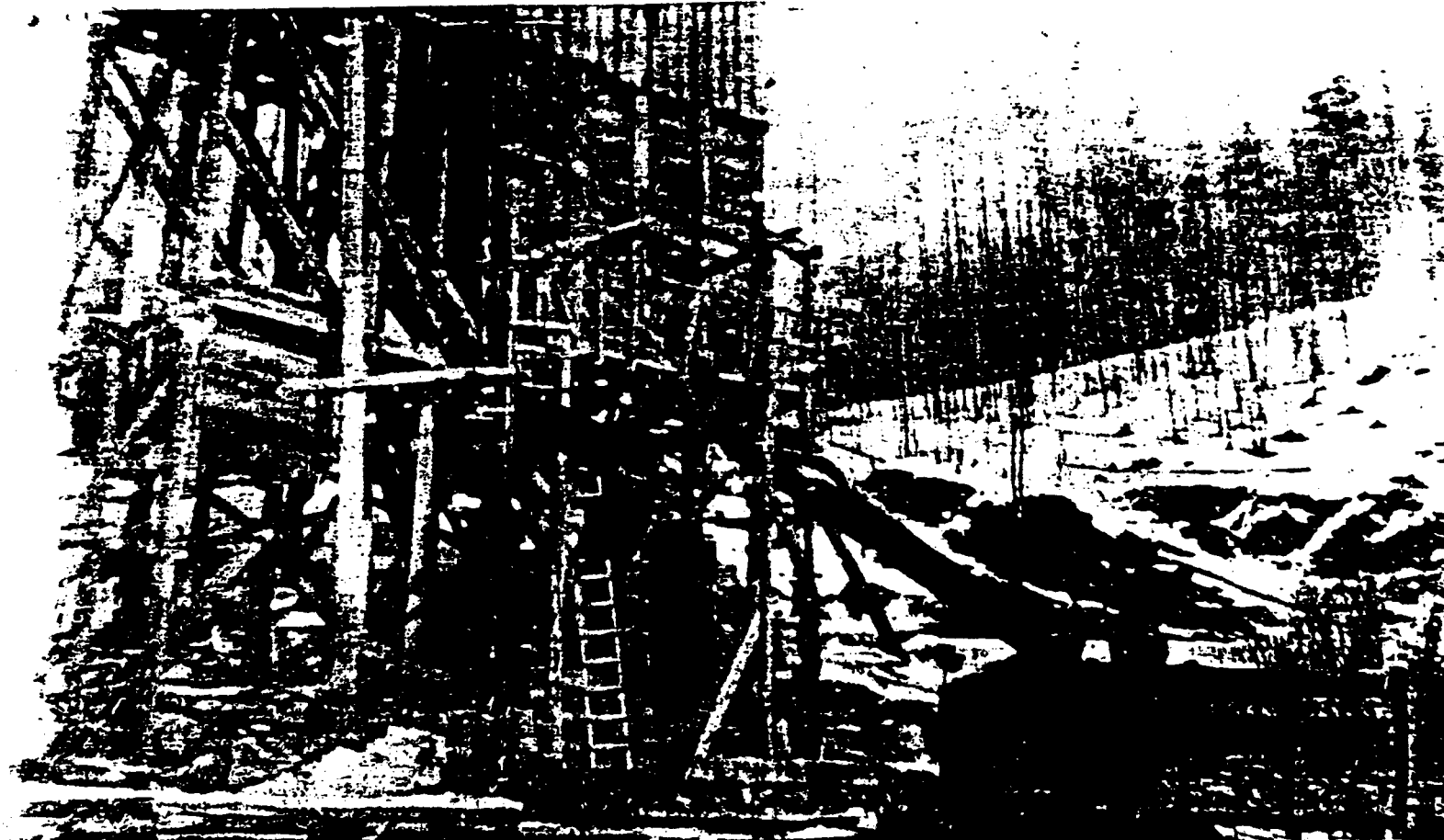


1925 Pellet's mining operations continued to prosper, and his success attracted other smelting companies. The National Lead Company came to town and invested in mining operations that employed 125 men. The International Smelting Company built a 40-room bunkhouse on Glasgow Avenue for their men—originally named the Ricato Hotel. This building re-

cently was renovated, and it has been operating as the Rico Hotel (as of 1995).

1926 Lengthy litigation between the Rico-Argentine Mining Company and the Syndicate Mining & Milling Company was resolved in the Rico-Argentine's favor. And the Rico-Argentine company acquired control of the old Pro Patria mill. The Western Colorado Power Company

(Continued on Page 439)



built a high-voltage electric line over Lizard Head Pass to serve the Rico area.

In its turbulent history of "boom-and-bust" cycles as a mining town, Rico was well into its third "boom cycle." Rico's population multiplied to over 1,000 residents; however, so many houses had been torn down during the slow days after World War I, that a severe housing shortage developed. Old businesses were revived, and new businesses opened their doors. A new dancehall was built, and social action got a lift. The "good old days" had returned in Rico.

1927 Prosperity continued in the Rico area. The average wage for miners rose to \$6.00 per day, an increase of \$2.00 from 1923. Bob Pellet's payroll increased to 300 workers. The old Pro Patria mill, at the foot of Mantz Avenue, was totally rebuilt as a modern selective-flotation mill, with a capacity of 250 tons per day. Ore worth almost \$1.5 million was produced in the district during the year.

All of this success was achieved in spite of a bad flood on June 28. The Do-

lores River and Silver Creek both ran wild, and the town and the RGS suffered heavy damage, particularly to bridges. A mile of track on the RGS was washed out, and no trains made it in or out Rico for about three weeks.

1928 Eleven active mines produced almost \$1.5 million in ore, mostly lead and zinc, as prosperity continued in the Rico area. The town's population continued to increase, and about 20 new houses were constructed.

(Continued on Page 482)

FROM "THE RICO ITEM," FEBRUARY 1932 -
COURTESY WENDE P. STUART

NINE MEN started from town Wednesday morning, on foot for Coke Ovens to assist in bringing the two engines and plow in to Rico after which the Railroad Company will open the line between here and Vance Junction with the rotary.

THE NIGGER BABY SLIDE was cleared Friday of last week. The county machinery, with five men, and Mr. Kline of the St. Louis S. & R. Co. donating three men, shoveled out 120 feet of snow four feet deep. This again enables the men to drive their cars to work at the tunnel.



CHARLES J. LEE PHOTO - DAVID C. BUTLER COLLECTION

THIS SMALL AUTOMOBILE must have been built prior to the 1920's. The car had carbide-gas headlights and oil cowl lamps, and it was not equipped with a self-starter—as the hand crank looks well used. The axle length was unusually short, and the wheels would not have fit into the ruts of the dirt roads of this era! Down the hill (at the left) is a glimpse of the school and farther down is the Atlantic Cable tunnel.

THIS PHOTOGRAPH was taken from a higher elevation on Expectation Mountain and illustrates how Rico was built on the sedimentary area below the nearby mountains (on a terrace above the river). Blackhawk Mountain, at the left, is beyond Dolores Mountain, at the right. From this perspective, the task prospectors had in searching for mineral wealth becomes apparent. Mining dumps are visible on Dolores Mountain. Rico had this appearance ca. 1927, and by this time, the Pro Patria mill was the town's largest structure, with numerous additions having been completed.

CHARLES MILLER ENGEL COLLECTION
- COURTESY RACHEL A. HARDWICK

1929 The good times ended in Rico during 1929. The beginning of the infamous Great Depression caused a drop in metal prices, and most of the mines closed down or greatly cut back their production. The mainline of the RGS was blockaded by the Ames mud slide for most of the year. (See the story about the Ames mud slide in Volume III of this series.) Loss of income resulting from the blockade, as well as from reduced ore shipments forced the RGS into its second bankruptcy.

1930 The Great Depression got worse, and there was little demand for metals, as the Nation's factories shut down. During a two-year period, the annual value of ore produced in the Pioneer Mining District

(Continued on Page 484)



CHARLES MILLER ENGEL COLLECTION -
COURTESY RACHEL A. HARDWICK

THE KOSTER MARKET was destroyed as the result of a fire that swept through the building in 1931. Fortunately, the firemen were able to subdue the flames and saved the building next door (which has the bay window that overhangs the sidewalk). Smoke and fire had engulfed the upper floor and roof when this picture was taken, sometime after the fire had started at the back of the building.

AS FIREMEN brought the blaze under control, smoke and steam poured out of the ruins. The roof had collapsed, but the metal stamped-brick siding helped to prevent the fire from spreading to the building next door. Probably because the fire happened during the day, the blaze was spotted early enough to get it under control. After dark, a fire can burn for a longer period, making it harder to control—and the flames can leap to the next buildings, sometimes leveling an entire block.

CHARLES MILLER ENGEL COLLECTION -
COURTESY RACHEL A. HARDWICK

dropped from about \$1,500,000 to a mere \$200,000. Bob Pellet kept a small force of about 40 miners working, to avoid laying them off, even though he had to make up losses with his own money to pay them. Many residents left town, but others could not even afford to leave.

1931 Bob Pellet's losses continued to mount, and he finally was forced to close down his Rico operations, including the Pro Patria mill. Only \$2,000 worth of ore was produced in the district during 1931.

The RGS began a cost-reduction program by building and placing in operation the "Galloping Goose" railbuses, Nos. 1, 2 and 3, which replaced more costly steam-powered passenger trains.

1932 Rico's economy hit bottom in 1932. For the first time in over 50 years, no ore was produced during the year. At the same time, the town's population fell from about 2,500 to about 300 in 1932.

A severe snowstorm, which began on February 8, 1932, isolated Rico from



CHARLES MILLER ENGEL COLLECTION -
COURTESY RACHEL A. HARDWICK

ON THE NEXT DAY, after the disastrous fire at the Koster Market, the windows were boarded up to protect the remaining salvageable contents. The building was a total loss, and it was subsequently torn down.

both north and south. A relief train spent five days clearing the line from Durango to Mancos, and another four days opening the track to Dolores and Rico. The snow-clearing train from the north had even less success. After fighting the snow on the south side of Lizard Head Pass for days, the crew had to give up. The plow-flanger was left at Burns (2.6 miles north of Rico), two engines were abandoned at Coke Ovens, and a Galloping Goose was required to stay at Lizard Head. The snow blockade lasted for over three months, and the line north of Rico was not reopened until May 16.

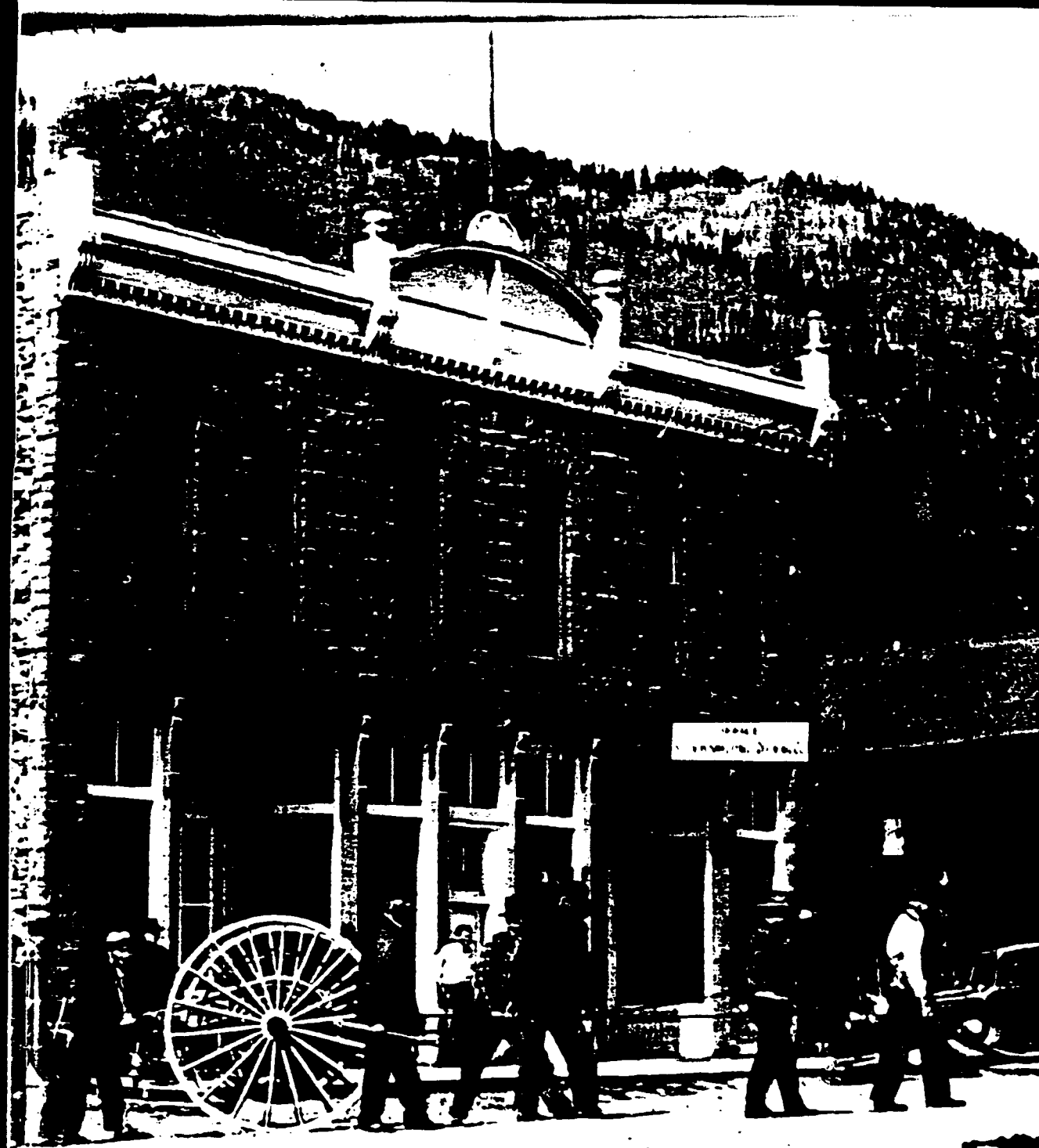
1933 Rico had been the only incorporated town in Dolores County since its founding in 1879. However, a small, but growing, settlement named Dove Creek—located near the west end of the county—began to challenge Rico in the 1930's. Unlike Rico, Dove Creek had a more stable economy, based on agriculture. In 1930, Dove Creek's population was only 120 people, and the town was not incorporated until 1939; however, in 1933, Dove Creek succeeded in "stealing" the county newspaper from Rico. For the first time in over 50 years, Rico was without its own newspaper.



ORVAL L. JAHNKE COLLECTION

THE RICO FIRE DEPARTMENT – Hose Team No. 1 – proudly posed for action with their hook-and-ladder wagon and hose cart. This view probably was taken during a practice fire drill, which took place during the early 1930's. Next door, a signboard was hanging from the wall of the stone Burley Block structure, which read: "Office – St. Louis Smelting & Refining Co." The Burley Block still stands today (1996).

1934 Mining was still very slow in the Rico area, but there was some renewed interest in gold mining, as a result of an increase in gold prices. Since 1850, the price of gold had been controlled by the Federal government at \$20.67 per ounce. To help the Nation recover from its disastrous economic depression, the gov-



ernment allowed the price of gold to increase to \$35.00 per ounce over a three-year period, beginning in 1933. A few of the mines in the district reopened in 1934, and they were worked mostly for gold and silver. However, the St. Louis Smelting & Refining Company shut

down operations at the St. Louis Tunnel.
1935 Silver prices rose; however, ore production in the Rico area increased very little.
1936 The Obendorfer General Store closed down, after almost 50 years of family operation.

06-5050-08-1921-061

[THOSE CHECKED
IN PENCIL
APPEAR IN
R.G.S. STORY]

RICO-ARGENTINE SITE FACILITIES

DOLORES COUNTY

Mining claims and operating Mines

- ✓ Shamrock Mine (operated by Pelleyre Mining & Milling Co.)
 - ✓ Smuggler
 - ✓ Riverside
- ✓ Atlantic Cable
 - ✓ Phoenix
 - ✓ Yellow Jacket group
 - ✓ Black Hawk group
- ✓ Columbia
 - ✓ Cross (Nigger Baby Hill)
 - ✓ Grand View
 - ✓ Major
 - ✓ Hope (Nigger Baby Hill)
 - ✓ Pelican
 - ✓ Enterprise Mine
 - ✓ Rico-Aspen Mine
 - Pro Patria group (operated by Rico Enterprise Mining Co.)
 - Wellington group (C.H.C. Hill)
- ✓ Silver Swan (operated by Rico Mining & Reduction Co.; sold to St. Louis Smelting in 1927)
 - ✓ Princeton Mine
 - ✓ Blaine Tunnel (on Silver Creek)
 - ✓ Mountain Springs Mine (pyrite supplied the acid plant)
 - ✓ Payroll Mine
 - Puzzle Mine (on Horse Creek)
 - Poor Boy Mine
 - ✓ Sambo Mine (below Silver Creek)
 - Iron Clad Mine (south of Rico)
 - Columbia Mine (south of Rico)
 - ✓ Blue Bell Mine (south of Rico)
 - ✓ Rico-Argentine Mine
 - ✓ A.B.G. group (Rico Ventura Mining Co.)
 - C.V.G. Group (Rico Ventura Mining Co.)
 - ✓ Buckhorn Tunnel group
 - Etta Grace Mine
 - ✓ Falcon Mine
 - Hicks Mine
 - Lucky Boy Mine
 - Newman Mine
 - Stephens Mine
 - Union Carbonate Mine
 - Log Cabin Mine

✓ = HISTORICAL
MINE REPORT
FILES @
CO STATE ARCHIVES

✓ AZTEC

✓ LITTLE MAGGIE

✓ BLACK HAWK

PEPPER ADDITIONS
12/2/21

✓ SILVER CLAD

✓ RICO BOY

✓ ST. LOUIS

✓ SWICKHEIMER GROUP

17/11/21

COLUMBIA TAILINGS

LEXINGTON MINE

SANTA CRUZ MINE

- ✓ Lillie D. Mine (operated by Rico Mining & Reduction Co.; sold to St. Louis Smelting in 1927; located on C.H.C. Hill)
- Maggie group (operated by Rico Mining & Reduction Co.; sold to St. Louis Smelting in 1927)
- Iron group (operated by Rico Mining & Reduction Co.; sold to St. Louis Smelting in 1927; located on Nigger Baby Hill)
- Argentine group (operated by Rico Mining & Reduction Co.; sold to St. Louis Smelting in 1927)
- ✓ Badger group
 - Hidden Treasure adit
 - Sunflower Mine
 - Golden Fleece (aka New Year) Mine
- ✓ Mediterranean tunnel
 - Laxey Mine
 - South Park Mine
 - Hiburn's tunnel
 - Onamo tunnel
 - Isabella shaft
 - Wakeman tunnel
 - N.A. Cowdrey Mine (eastern slope of Expectation Mountain)
 - Tonnale Mine (eastern slope of Expectation Mountain)
 - Argonaut Mine (eastern slope of Expectation Mountain)
 - Bancroft Mine (eastern slope of Expectation Mountain)
 - Little Maggie group (eastern slope of Expectation Mountain)
 - Ironclad Mine (eastern slope of Expectation Mountain)
 - Whim Mine (eastern slope of Expectation Mountain)
 - Little Leopard Mine (eastern slope of Expectation Mountain)
 - Montezuma Mine (eastern slope of Expectation Mountain)
 - Calumet Mine (eastern slope of Expectation Mountain)
- ✓ Aztec Mine (eastern slope of Expectation Mountain)
- Zulu Chief Mine (eastern slope of Expectation Mountain)
- ✓ California Mine (eastern slope of Expectation Mountain)
- Grand View group (Nigger Baby Hill)
- Alma Mater Mine (Nigger Baby Hill)
- Nellie Bly Mine (Nigger Baby Hill)
- Last Chance Mine (Nigger Baby Hill)
- Princeton Mine (C.H.C. Hill)
- C.H.C. Mine (C.H.C. Hill)
- Logan Mine (C.H.C. Hill)
- Pigeon Mine (C.H.C. Hill)
- Iron Giant Mine (C.H.C. Hill)
- Iron Dollar Mine
- Eighty-Eight Mine
- ✓ Burns Mines

Mining companies

- ✓ **St. Louis Smelting & Refining Company**, division of National Lead Company
- ✓ **Rico Mining and Reduction Company** (successor is St. Louis Smelting & Refining Co.)
- ✓ **Rico-Argentine Mining Company** (incorporated 1902; acquired the mining rights to over 80% of the Mines in the Pioneer District in 1938; acquired IS&R properties in 1941, including Atlantic Cable and Shamrock Mines, Pro Patria millsite; purchased St. Louis Tunnel in 1942 from National Lead Co.; by 1942 the company owned almost the entire town of Rico; shut down all mining operations in 1949 and again in 1977)
- ✓ **Union Carbonate Mines, Inc.**
- ✓ **International Smelting Co.**
- ✓ **International Smelting & Refining Co.**
- ✓ **Grand View Mining & Smelting Company**
- ✓ **Pasadena Reduction Company**
- ✓ **Rico Smelting Company**
- ✓ **Santa Clara Mining & Milling Company**
- ✓ **Rico Chemical Reduction Company**
- ✓ **Rico-Aspen (or Rico & Aspen) Consolidated Mining Company** (formed 1891, owned Rico-Aspen Mine)
- ✓ **Colorado Milling & Concentrating Company** (operated a mill just south of Rico)
- ✓ **United Rico Mines Company** (in 1901 it acquired most of the major mining properties in the Pioneer District, including the Atlantic Cable, Cross, Enterprise, Grand View, Hope and Rico-Aspen claims; went bankrupt in 1911)
- ✓ **Rico Mining & Milling Company** (built zinc concentration mill in 1901, location unknown)
- ✓ **Pro Patria Company** (operated Pro Patria Mine & Mill)
- ✓ **Syndicate Mining & Milling Company** (acquired most of the patented claims in the Pioneer District in 1916)
- ✓ **Falcon Mining Company**
- ✓ **Pell-Eyre (or Pelleyre) Mining Company** (subsidiary of International Smelting Co.)
- ✓ **National Lead Company**
- ✓ **Mountain States Mining Company** (operated Payroll Mine in 1960s)
- ✓ **Rico Development Corporation**
- ✓ **Falcon Lead Mining Company**
- ✓ **Rico Enterprise Mining Co.**
- ✓ **Rico Wellington Mining Co.**
- ✓ **Rico Ventura Mining Co.**
- ✓ **SINDICATE MINING & MILLING CO.**

Mills

Falcon Mill (operated by International Smelting Co.), located at the north end of Rico between Highway 145 and the Dolores River (1926-28; almost all ore Mine in the district in 1927 was sent to this mill; dismantled in 1941)

✓ **Argentine Mill** (built 1938 or 1939, operated by Rico-Argentine Mining Co., located about 2 miles up Silver Creek; closed down in 1949; operated intermittently in the 1950s)

✓ **Colorado Milling & Concentrating Company Wet Process Mill** (Sanborn map shows 1899, ¾ mile south of Rico Post Office)

Rico Mining & Milling Company Mill (built 1901, location unknown)

Pro Patria Mill (built by Pro Patria Company in 1902 at the foot of Mantz Avenue, connected to Pro Patria Mine by 3,600-foot aerial tramway; little used until 1908, when it burned down; remodeled in 1913 and operated for a short time; Rico-Argentine gained control of it in 1926 and completely rebuilt it in 1927—at this time it was the largest structure in Rico; mill was closed in 1931; millsite was acquired by Rico-Argentine in 1941; completely shut down in 1948)

COLUMBIA MILL

Smelters

✓ **Grand View Smelter** (operated by Grand View Mining & Smelting Company, built 1880, 500 feet north of Silver Creek, on the outskirts of Rico; concentrator added in 1882)

✓ **Pasadena Smelter** (built 1884, near south end of Rico, near final wye on the Rio Grande Southern, operated by the Pasadena Reduction Company)

Rico Smelting Company Smelter (built 1882, south side of Rico, near Dolores River)

Santa Clara Mining & Milling Company Smelter (built 1882, north of town near the head of Horse Gulch)

Rico Chemical Reduction Company Smelter (built 1882, north of town near the head of Horse Gulch)

Other

✓ **St. Louis & Refining Company** began development of the **St. Louis Tunnel** in 1922 (portal located about one mile north of Rico, on the east side of the Dolores River; operations closed down in 1934)

✓ **Rico-Argentine Mining Company** began operation of the Dolores River sulfuric acid plant in 1955; generated iron oxide tailings in settling ponds 11-18; located near portal of the St. Louis Tunnel; closed in 1967.

Rico-Argentine Mining Company began operation of a 100,000-ton **heap leach pad** in 1973, adjacent to the acid plant, to extract gold and silver from dump material from the Newman Hill area.